



*Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond*  
**March 4 – 11, 2016**

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# Aboriginal Arts & Culture

## World's-biggest Inuit art collection at WAG just got a whole lot bigger

**The WAG already housed 14,000 Inuit artifacts, more than anywhere else on the planet, and its collection just grew by another 8,000 pieces.**



Luke Palka (left) helps carefully un-crate a unique serpentine stone sculpture of a mother and child by renowned Cape Dorset artist Kiugak Ashoona, one of the thousands of rare pieces WAG will display over the next five years.

**By:** [Braeden Jones](#) Metro Published on Thu Mar 03 2016

Last week, six high-security shipments of priceless art finished the final leg of a 6,000 km journey to bring Winnipeg Inuit treasures that haven't been seen in decades.

A new partnership between the Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG), Government of Manitoba and the Government of Nunavut will see the more than 8,000 Inuit artefacts displayed on a long-term loan.

"The Government of Nunavut has entrusted the WAG with this collection for a period of five years," said gallery director Stephen Borys, Thursday during a behind-the-scenes sneak-peak at the art works.

He explained the rarely seen collection, which has been in storage since Nunavut became a territory, will eventually be a key feature of the planned \$60-million Inuit Art Centre downtown.

But first, a selection of the prints, drawings, carvings, ceramics and canvas—currently being carefully curated—will be displayed at the WAG this spring.

Borys said the WAG is well suited to handle the massive collection, as it has been collecting Inuit art for more than 60 years—amassing 14,000 pieces for what was already the largest collection in the world and is now much, much bigger.

“This is a really unique partnership... which is going to allow the world to see a collection that has not been on view,” he said.

Besides dramatically increasing the WAG’s Inuit art collection for display, Luke Palka, the Wag’s manager of production and design, said the arrival of the Nunavut collection also marks one of the larger shipments of delicate art the museum has received.

He said shipping art often means a few dozen crates or single pieces.

“This collection here is over 50 crates, (and) there’s been hundreds of custom boxes created,” he said. “It has been a massive undertaking logistically to get it down from Yellowknife.”

Lack of staging facilities in Yellowknife meant the crates had to be built in Winnipeg and then sent up North to pick up their cargo. It carefully made its way south, to Ontario and Quebec in some cases before coming to Winnipeg.

“Everything is arriving in perfect condition but it took a lot of pre-planning and enough bubble wrap to fill a swimming pool, basically,” Palka said.

Radovan Radulovic, head of conservation, said there is also “condition reporting” done at each end of the shipment.

It’s painstaking work.

“There are pieces literally smaller than the size of a grain of rice... (and) sculptures that are a couple feet, two or three feet in diameter,” he said.

Experienced Inuit art curator Darlene Coward Wight said one of the stone sculptures, a piece from renowned Cape Dorset artist Kiugak Ashoona, was “really exciting” to uncrate Thursday, likening the experience to “Christmas for a curator.”

“I keep saying it’s exciting but it really is... very much a great contribution to our collection,” she said.

Borys also said that showcasing the Nunavut collection expands collaboration between the WAG and the North—and holds the promise of creating future sharing opportunities.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/winnipeg/2016/03/03/winnipeg-art-gallery-recieves-8000-inuit-artifacts.html>

## The darkness and light of *Birdie* reflects author Tracey Lindberg's own life story



*Birdie* is Tracey Lindberg's first novel, and it has landed on Canada Reads. (Fabiola Carletti/CBC)

Sunday March 06, 2016

*Birdie* is a novel about a woman on a quest.

She travels from her home in northern Alberta to Gibsons, B.C. The goal — to meet Pat John, who played Jesse on the long running CBC TV series *The Beachcombers*.

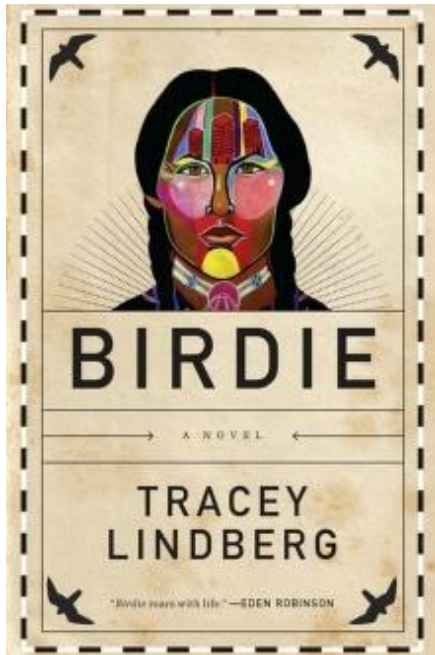
Grounded in Cree poetics and threaded together with the hard love and laughter of women, *Birdie* is also about finding family, home and healing from a dark and violent past.

It was a journey that author Tracey Lindberg began in law school. She found herself writing pieces and scraps of a story while she should have been studying Canadian law.

Lindberg said she has always written fiction, but was driven to capture this particular story because the character, Birdie, wouldn't leave her alone.

"I was gathering [her story] along the way like snippets of a quilt and piecing them together," she said.

"I just kept telling myself, if you can just get this story out then you'll be a good lawyer. If you can just finish this and get it out of the way... and it just never got out of the way."



A Cree woman graces the cover of Tracey Lindberg's debut novel, *Birdie*. (Harper Collins )

Lindberg is from the Kelly Lake Cree Nation in B.C., and is already an award-winning academic writer and teacher. She said that for every dark part of the story there is light, humour and the strength of women — and that those things are drawn from her own life.

"I have the gift of being rich with women; rich with women's laughter," she said, admitting that she copied entire sections of dialogue in the book from conversations with her own family.

"It's quite reflective of a day in the life of my sisters," she added.

But this is also story about violence, sexual abuse and the difficult journey of shattering, finding and piecing yourself back together. For Lindberg, who is an abuse survivor herself, that was the most challenging part of the book to write.

"Somebody said to me this is the first time where I've ever read about sexual abuse and not been triggered, and I think that's beautiful and that's an accomplishment. But I was triggered every time I wrote about it."

She says she would get close to it and have to stop, take a walk, and do some self-care before trying again. When she finally did write it, Lindberg says there were a lot of tears, and to this day she cannot read the two scenes of violence in *Birdie*.

"You think that you would have this release because you have detailed fragments of somebody's painful and awful past or... your painful and awful past. But you don't feel release. You don't feel relief."

After a pause, Lindberg continued.

"The writing of the book didn't free me. I don't know that it frees anyone who reads it, but it starts the process and little tiny healings."

Still, Lindberg says writing about it was the start of something.

"I can say that since then I haven't taken a step back. And that will have to be enough for a lifetime."

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*Birdie* is on the shortlist for [Canada Reads](#), and will be defended by Bruce Poon Tip.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/unreserved-honours-the-strength-of-indigenous-women-1.3472826/the-darkness-and-light-of-birdie-reflects-author-tracey-lindberg-s-own-life-story-1.3476140>

## Public to put stamp on new Edmonton art project



The public will be invited to put their own designs to the birds as part of this public art project.

**By:** Ben Freeland For Metro Published on Thu Mar 03 2016

A public art workshop on Saturday will live up to it's name allowing people to add their own touch to a new mural project for the Beaver Hills House Park.

The workshop, led by Winnipeg-born Métis artist Destiny Swiderski, will be held at the Drawing Room Studios and Salon on 97 Street. Participants are encouraged to tell their own story through textile drawings and colouring inside bird-shaped profiles, which will ultimately be silk-screened onto steel birds and attached to the Beaver Hills House Park wall.

“It was important to me that it be a public participation-type project, one that’s not simply about the artist,” says Swiderski. “The idea here is to give the people of Edmonton a voice.”

In planning the project, Swiderski conducted extensive research into the park’s namesake hills, located east of Edmonton, which she discovered were an important migratory site for the Bohemian waxwing bird. The mural in the park downtown will consist of 146 bird silhouettes, each inscribed with project participants’ designs.

While the workshop is open to all participants, the project has placed a heavy emphasis on indigenous voices. Cultural guidance for the project was provided by Elder Jerry Saddleback of the Samson Cree First Nation, who provided the Cree language text (in both Latin and Cree syllabics) for the mural.

“The idea behind this project was to create a gateway into the park,” Swiderski explains. “With this mural, we will literally have the community welcoming people in by way of the bird motifs.”

The workshop will be held at the Drawing Room (10253 97 St.) on Saturday, March 5 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Those interested in participating should register at [info@drawingroomedmonton.com](mailto:info@drawingroomedmonton.com).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/edmonton/2016/03/03/public-to-put-stamp-on-new-edmonton-art-project-.html>

## Night of Artists big and beyond

Saturday, Mar 05, 2016 06:00 am

By: Anna Borowiecki



Singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark, one of Canada's national treasures, presents Nomad, a 1,000 year history of the Inuit, at Night of Artists on Sunday at the Enjoy Centre.

Looking for a one-of-a-kind art show this weekend, but have no idea where to go? Just keep reading about the 19th annual Night of Artists art exhibition taking place at the Enjoy Centre today and tomorrow.

For a show that's a surefire hit and delivers more than you would expect, it's a place of endless discoveries with 40 different visual artists exhibiting their wares.

This year's theme is Oh Canada and artists have embraced it with gusto putting on public view everything from acrylics, watercolours and caustic works in different styles from abstract expressionism to pointillism.

Yes, it's a sumptuous event that introduces a vast swath of paintings to the middle class. But it also entertains with a showcase of local performance artists, a fashion show and colouring workshops.

Best of all, celebrated Inuit singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark presents Nomad, a 60-minute speaking, singing and visual presentation of Inuit history through the last 1,000 years.

The three-time Juno Award winner uses Nomad to shed light on the psychological and cultural impact of rapid change. It starts at 2 p.m. A question and answer period follows the one-hour presentation.

"I contacted Susan in October 2015 and met her when I went to Oakville, Ont., to work on Canada's 150th anniversary mural mosaic. She lives in Oakville, by the way, and when I was there we formed a friendship," says Phil Alain, founder of Night of Artists.

"Her presentation ties in really well with this year's theme of Oh Canada."

Just prior to Aglukark, the Brazilian Samba Caliente Dancers strut the stage at noon wearing glittery, feathery costumes reminiscent of Rio's carnival parade.

"They're another group that shows Canada's multicultural heritage," Alain said.

On Saturday, the day begins at noon with roots entertainers Erin Kay, Ken Stead and Mohsin Zaman. All were featured at the Edmonton Folk Festival.

"Erin and Ken are a couple. They play together and solo and Mohsin is a phenomenal guitarist. He's almost more of an instrumentalist than a vocalist. He has a very captivating stage presence," Alain said.



The rule-breaking world of local fashion is highlighted on Saturday night at 6:30 p.m. with a fashionista's gala accompanied by some soft, fluid jazz.

International fashion designer Laura Dreger is on the top bill.

"Laura and I actually went to Grande Prairie College and we both followed our path down the arts road," Alain said. "Through Night of Artists I've tried to help her get a leg up in the creative spirit and I've included her since 2006."

One of Dreger's big moments occurred two years ago when the fashion designer showcased her line at a cocktail soiree at the Canadian embassy in Washington, D.C.

In addition, models from Western Canada Fashion Week will deliver a sampling of wearables featured during the eight-day event starting March 24.

WCFW fashion designers include Eve and Enoch, Ebb and crow, Suka clothing, and Tressa Heckbert's striking Sessa wearables. Heckbert is the former owner of St. Albert's now defunct Meese Clothing, a Canadian designed and manufactured garment store.

"I like to call this a smorgasbord for the senses. People can visualize art, discover a musician or see a fashion designer they've never heard of before or a presenter they've never seen," Alain said. "Most festivals focus on one thing. Here we try to raise the profile of the people in the show and introduce new artists to people excited about exploring the arts."

For more information on Night of Artists visit [nightofartists.com](http://nightofartists.com).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.stalbertgazette.com/article/Night-of-Artists-big-and-beyond-20160305>

## **Granny Hanky Headbands mix First Nations tradition with modern design**

**Yukon entrepreneur turns elders' kerchiefs into youthful headbands**

By Cheryl Kawaja, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 05, 2016 8:00 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 05, 2016 8:00 AM CT



Heather Dickson wears one of her Granny Hanky Headbands. (Dickson Designs/Facebook)

Whitehorse designer Heather Dickson is putting a new twist on a traditional staple, using colourful scarves — the kind often worn by elders — to create beaded headbands.

"I was always drawn to them," the 25-year-old says of the bold kerchiefs.

"You know, as much as I love our grandmothers, I couldn't rock it the way they do, so I cut it up one day and I made myself a headband.

"I wore it around and I got made fun of a little bit. Some people were like, 'Oh, you're wearing a granny hanky. It's for grandmas,' and I said, 'Yeah, I like it. It's kind of colourful.'"

A friend asked to buy one and Dickson added some beadwork.

That was the beginning of Dickson Designs and now, less than a year later, her headbands have been sold all over North America. She calls them Granny Hanky Headbands and as soon as she posts new stock to her online store, it sells out almost instantly.



Elder Mary Effie Snowshoe wears one of the bright-coloured kerchiefs that are the inspiration for Dickson Designs' Granny Hanky Headbands. (Snowshoe Studios)

"Very quickly I learned that I could not keep up with the demand myself," she says. "I started inviting women to bead for me and it's been absolutely amazing."

"It's exciting," says Kaylyn Baker, one of several the beaders working with Dickson. "I get to see other people wearing my bead work, it's just really awesome."

Dickson says the many hours of sitting, measuring and sewing is worth it — especially when she hears directly from customers on social media.

"I find a lot of my customers feel like they've gone back to their roots and they show their First Nations pride."

Steve Smith, Dickson's uncle and chief of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations, has been a sounding board for her business.



Beaded granny hanky headbands by Dickson Designs. (Cheryl Kawaja/CBC)

"It's been very rapid," he said. "The rest of the family has marvelled at how quickly it took off."

He sees her work as both traditional and modern art.

"We were a people that evolved; we had to evolve. Our land is pretty unforgiving up here, so we had to be able to adapt and it's really neat to see our young people adapting and the granny hanky is almost the perfect example of an adaptation.

"It's still a traditional method. It's born from tradition but it's modern. It's uniquely Yukon and I think it just brings our past into the future."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/granny-hanky-headbands-1.3466165>

# Demystifying Aboriginal culture

By [Celina Ip](#)

Monday, March 7, 2016 12:47:18 MST PM



Native storyteller Denise Miller engaged CLMS students in a presentation on Aboriginal culture on March 4. Miller's interactive presentation included stories, humour and drumming.

On March 4, Cold Lake Middle School students drummed their way to an understanding of Aboriginal culture.

Native Canadian storyteller Denise Miller engaged the students in an interactive presentation in which she blended humour, storytelling and drumming.

"I like telling stories and what I'm brought in to do specifically with these students is to talk about Aboriginal culture - about the Metis, Inuit and First Nations cultures and helping them to better understand what the word aboriginal means and what it's all about," said Miller.

"I broaden the point of view so that it can include all kinds of perspectives, so they don't have their idea of native peoples being someone living in teepees or igloos but know that we are average, everyday people. I mean sometimes I'll say where do you think I live and I'll actually have kids who think I live in a teepee."

Miller began by asking the students where they were born and where their ancestors were from and then she shared some personal points about her own Metis ancestry.

"On my dad's side there's some Cherokee background mix and my mom's is Mohawk mix so I say Metis," said Miller.

The students were fully engaged and shot their hands up to join in on the conversation.

Miller then gave an engaging presentation on Canadian Aboriginal peoples' history and shared a few traditional Aboriginal legends to her audience.

“I tell some fun legends that really give an idea about how inventive we are and how creative we are and how through the ages there’s a lot of heroes and a lot of amazing things have happened for our people and then the respect increases,” said Miller.

Miller ended her presentation with a classic native drum song in which she had the students sing along.

“I’m told that after my presentations the kids that are Aboriginal they feel a lot stronger about themselves,” said Miller. “And the other students understand a lot more about the native people as the first people that were here and people that are every kind of people just like everyone.”

According to Miller, the participants were all engaged with the presentation and followed up with great feedback and questions.

“I demystify their notion of Aboriginal people,” said Miller. “Both students and teachers are amazing and have a much better understanding after my presentation.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.coldlakesun.com/2016/03/07/demystifying-aboriginal-culture>

## **Director yanks controversial film about Inuit from film festival**

Christopher Curtis, Montreal Gazette

Published on: March 8, 2016 | Last Updated: March 8, 2016 12:54 PM EST

The man behind the controversial film, *Of the North*, pulled out of a Montreal screening of his movie Monday, citing backlash over its portrayal of Inuit.

Instead of showing *Of the North*, director Dominic Gagnon said he would participate in a discussion about it Monday night at Le Ciné-Club La Banque on St-Laurent Blvd. And though prominent members of the city’s indigenous community waited outside the theatre, Gagnon was a no show.

The film gained traction on the festival circuit when it was released last year but critics have called it racist and exploitative for its depiction of Inuit. As opposition mounted, organizers of the Rendezvous du cinéma québécois festival removed *Of the North* from its lineup in February.

Without ever actually travelling to Canada’s north, Gagnon used footage taken from YouTube and other websites to create a collage of scenes that depict life in Inuit communities.

The footage, however, is presented without context and much of it is jarring: children are neglected, people drink heavily and crash an ATV. Among the most shocking moments is an explicit sex scene where the image of an Inuk woman's vagina is intercut with the that of a dog's backside.

"Every Inuk person I know who has seen it has felt sick watching it," said Tanya Tagaq, the Polaris Prize winning artist and one of the film's most vocal critics. "It's triggering, it's hurtful. ... Because we live in a world where we lose our own to suicide and violence and abuse, we are not looking at the footage from the outside. We do not have that luxury.

"To have those same tired old stereotypes thoughtlessly plotted out and called art is just simple shock porn and very boring."

The Inuit are among the most marginalized people in Canada. Life expectancy, on average, is much lower in northern communities, suicide rates are high and access to affordable food is a constant struggle.

These problems are rooted in the country's colonialist policies, Tagaq says. Throughout the 1950s and beyond, the federal government forced Inuit families to live in crowded shacks and attend residential schools — where many suffered systematic abuse.

The link between this history and the sobering reality of life in the north is real and irrefutable, according to a report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Because none of this context makes it into the film, critics say it serves no purpose but to shock people.

In his defence, Gagnon has repeatedly claimed he is not a documentary filmmaker but, rather, an artist making a film about how Inuit "represent themselves" on social media. He insists his intention was never to belittle or insult the Inuit.

Gagnon's film was made possible by a \$32,000 grant from the Quebec Arts Council and it has been screened at festivals in Mexico, the Netherlands, New York City and Switzerland.

"We won't comment on (Of the North), our role is to support projects, to finance experimental projects among others," said Christian O'Leary, a spokesperson for the Quebec Arts Council. "There's always an opportunity to learn from our projects but I won't comment on (Of the North)."

Concordia University researcher Stephen Puskas says Gagnon could have avoided much of the controversy had he reached out to the Inuit community before making his film.

"I'm not advocating censorship, but if you involve Inuit from the very beginning, you send the message that we're in control of our own stories," said Puskas, who produces an



Inuit-language radio show on CKUT Montreal. “This wasn’t collaborative, it wasn’t respectful, in many cases it wasn’t factual.”

Puskas reached out to many of the people whose YouTube videos are featured in Gagnon’s film and heard from “about 40 of them” who said didn’t consent to their footage being used.

“If anything, this shows that it’s not a found footage film but a stolen footage film,” he said.

Despite much of the negativity that has emerged since the film’s release, Tagaq says she’s hopeful it can at least start a conversation.

“I can excuse the film being made, and truly believe that positivity can come out of this situation (through a) small act of reconciliation between the filmmaker and the Inuit,” said Tagaq. “What I cannot ignore is the complete disregard of our opinions and voices.”

**Direct Link:** <http://montrealgazette.com/news/director-yanks-controversial-film-of-inuk-people-from-film-festival>

## **Vancouver aims to become aboriginal cultural tourism destination in Canada in 2017**

*by Carlito Pablo on March 8th, 2016 at 9:29 AM*



Vancouver occupies the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.

The City of Vancouver is preparing for a \$7.7-million party in 2017 as Canada celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday.

To honour the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, whose unceded lands now form part of modern-day Vancouver, the city is working to become the aboriginal cultural destination in the country on that year.

“If we achieve our vision to position Vancouver as THE Aboriginal cultural tourism destination in Canada in 2017, we will support Vancouver’s aim to be a City where all residents, especially First Nations and Aboriginal peoples, feel welcome, supported, and included in our accomplishments as a City of Reconciliation and in our goal to be a healthy city for all,” states a staff report included in the agenda Tuesday (March 8) of council.

According to staff, the city will produce The Drum is Calling Festival, an 11-day celebration at Larwill Park in Downtown Vancouver.

“The beat of the drum is both a call to attendance and a call to participate, with many cultures able to share their own drumming traditions,” the staff report notes.

The Drum is Calling Festival will be held in July, featuring contemporary indigenous and non-indigenous arts. It is expected to draw 125,000 people.

“We will also promote traditional and contemporary Aboriginal festivals, performances, exhibitions, events and gatherings in Vancouver that bring together our diverse communities throughout the year in 2017 to visiting tourists,” according to the staff report.

Plans also include a Walk for Reconciliation, seen to attract 100,000 people.

In September 2013, thousands braved the rains to join a four-kilometre march in the city marking the end of Reconciliation Week in Vancouver.



A scene from the 2013 Walk for Reconciliation in Vancouver.

Based on a preliminary budget laid out by staff, the city expects to have a fund of \$7 million. These include \$1.9 million from the city, and the rest from federal and provincial



governments, sport hosting funds, and sponsorships. According to staff, an additional funding of \$750,000 is needed.

The city expects to get a \$3.5 million grant from the federal government's Canada 150 fund, which was created to support celebrations of the federal sesquicentennial or 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of confederation.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.straight.com/news/653281/vancouver-aims-become-aboriginal-cultural-tourism-destination-canada-2017>

## **Royal Winnipeg Ballet explores residential school legacy in Vancouver production**

**Royal Winnipeg Ballet performance also inspired a public forum about reconciliation being held March 9**

By The Early Edition, CBC News Posted: Mar 09, 2016 2:01 PM PT| Last Updated: Mar 09, 2016 2:01 PM PT

An acclaimed classic ballet exploring the legacy of the residential school system is coming to Vancouver next month.

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet's production *Going Home Star – Truth and Reconciliation* tells the story of a young urban First Nations woman who travels back in time with another character to witness the suffering of two students at the hands of a demonic priest.

Even though ballet is an art form that originated in Europe, it is an effective medium to explore this legacy, according to Tyrone McNeil, president of the First Nations Education Steering Committee.

"First Nations in particular are great at expressing themselves through stories and through art, and we've been doing that for a long time," said McNeil, who will be speaking at a free public forum on March 9 at the Vancouver Public Library, in anticipation of the ballet's Vancouver premiere.

"With this ballet it's an opportunity to share one of our stories through an artform that isn't ours, yet a lot of our artistic values and really critical messaging around Indian residential schools comes out in a very comprehensive way in this artform called ballet."

Educating the public

McNeil said he hopes the forum — and the ballet itself, which runs April 7 to 9 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre — will help people become "better informed and better educated" about First Nations and their worldview.

While he welcomes the fact that more will be taught about aboriginal peoples and their history in B.C. public schools, McNeil told The Early Edition that more could be done to emphasize the specific First Nations groups in each school's region.

"The majority of the curriculum rolling out right now takes a pan-B.C. First Nations context and [includes] other First Nations across the country," said McNeil, who is the vice-president of the Stó:lō Tribal Council.

"I see that as an entry and an opportunity for my local public school teachers, my local principals, my local trustees in the Fraser Valley to become more aware of First Nations in general and go, 'We shouldn't be talking First Nations we should be talking specifically about the Stó:lō people whose land we're on.'"

The forum Expressions of Reconciliation takes place at the Vancouver Public Library's Central branch, and also features traditional First Nations storytelling, and a question-and-answer period with Royal Winnipeg Ballet principal dancer Sophia Lee.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/royal-winnipeg-ballet-explores-residential-school-legacy-in-vancouver-production-1.3483841>

## **Filmmaker Who Pissed Off Inuit Wants to Fix It by Swapping Everyone's Face With Trudeau's**

By [Brigitte Noël](#)

March 9, 2016 | 1:25 pm

A controversial film criticized for portraying Canada's Inuit in an unfavorable light could soon be getting a literal facelift.

Dominic Gagnon's documentary *of the North*, a compilation of YouTube videos meant to illustrate life in Canada's northernmost regions, has been in the crosshairs of many Inuit artists who say the film is a racist and sensationalist depiction of their reality.

On Monday, Montreal's Ciné-Club La Banque cancelled a screening, claiming the filmmaker had been receiving threats. In early February, the film was also pulled from Montreal's [RVCQ](#) film festival, [at the urging of Inuit artists](#) who [petitioned](#) all festival organisers to stop showing it.

In response to the backlash, Gagnon says he is now working on a new edit which would replace every single character's face with the likeness of Justin Trudeau, "to draw his attention to the condition of Inuit in the North."

'I was sick to my stomach, literally I felt ill.'

The main criticism of *of the North* has been the fact that Gagnon, who has never visited that part of the country, failed to consult with the Inuit community. The filmmaker has also been lambasted for allegedly cherry-picking videos of debauchery, drinking and driving, vomiting and explicit sexual content and editing them out of context.

"I was sick to my stomach, literally I felt ill," Inuk filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril told VICE in January. "It just blew my mind that people could think that this was ok, that this could create any kind of healthy dialogue."

But the film's author—who points out the fact that film also shows beautiful images of Arctic traditions and scenery—says he only used clips people willingly put online and that the film should be interpreted as artistic experimentation, not a documentary. A group of Quebec filmmakers have recently come to his defense in an [open letter](#) that calls the protesters' efforts an affront to free speech.

Gagnon says the opposition to his work have also lead to threats and that he's considered reaching out to police. "I was warned that if I went ahead and showed the film, things would go badly for me. I was even forced to look up what to do in these circumstances."

In response to the backlash, the filmmaker has reworked the feature into various edits, "to reconcile the interests and protect my distributor, who isn't interested in presenting the problematic versions."

The original iteration, which featured unlicensed music by Inuk throat singer Tanya Tagaq, was [pulled](#) after the singer vehemently condemned the film. Another edition shows the videos directly within the YouTube interface. "For me this removes the notion of authorship," Gagnon says. "It's no longer a film, it's a video mashup."

The filmmaker is now hoping a tentative fifth version, which he's dubbed *Justin of the North*, will finally appease his detractors.

"I thought it could be a good move to convince Canada's Indigenous communities that I'm on their side, that this film was never meant to hurt them," Gagnon says, explaining that he's now working with a Montreal artist to devise a patch that will Trudeau-ify each

character in the film. "If this can help pressure Trudeau to keep his promises, then I want to run my film through this app and transform it into a political pamphlet."

In terms of content, this means the Canadian prime minister's face may be added to a graphic sex scene, a drunken ATV crash and a series of other tragic scenes that have outraged the Inuit community.

Inuk radio producer Stephen Puskas, one of *of the North*'s critics, says this seems like a strange move. "Is that a comment about Inuit, is that a comment about Justin Trudeau? I don't think that would help any arguments or the discussion," he says.

'I was warned that if I went ahead and showed the film, things would go badly for me.'

The main issue, Puskas points out, is still the fact that this Inuit community has never been part of the creative process. "Changes are being made, but no one is communicating with us," he says. "This is a film about Inuit, using a lot of footage from and about Inuit, but we're not active members. We're reactive, and only up until the last month, we haven't been invited to screening, we haven't been invited to contribute or even to defend ourselves."

Gagnon says he's open to meeting with Puskas and those he calls his "detractors."

"I want the dialogue, I want to talk to them about my actual intentions with the film."

He says he feels the anger is misdirected. "They have this platform, why aren't they using it to denounce the conditions in which they live," he says. "Why don't they criticize the political system under which they they suffer?"

**Direct Link:** <https://news.vice.com/article/filmmaker-who-pissed-off-inuit-people-wants-to-fix-it-by-swapping-everyones-face-with-trudeaus>

## Seal Meat and Caribou Offer a Taste of Canada's Inuit Identity

March 9, 2016 / 4:00 pm

By

**Nick Rose**



“Where’s the blubber?” is not a phrase you hear often in restaurant kitchens.

But tonight, in the kitchen of Ottawa’s [National Arts Centre](#), it’s a common refrain. Executive sous chef Martin Lévesque is overseeing a menu that will include raw caribou, seal meat, [muktuk](#) (beluga whale), arctic char, and even narwhal blubber. It’s all part of the [Taste of the Arctic](#) event which forces Lévesque to push his boundaries on an annual basis.

“The challenge with these ingredients is that you don’t cook with them every day,” he says. “When you get into these types of meats, you really have to do your homework; you have to talk to the butchers and look online. Seal, for example, is popular up North, but down here in Ottawa it’s really rare. But it’s fun, too; my guys in the kitchen like it and it introduces them to new ingredients.”



National Arts Centre Executive Sous Chef Martin Lévesque. Photos by Nick Rose.

“Down here in Ottawa” is another phrase you don’t hear often in Canada, but many of the attendees have travelled over 2,000 kilometers south to the nation’s capital. Needless to say, Lévesque was mindful of honouring a very rich culinary tradition.

“You really have to pay attention to these ingredients,” Lévesque says. “It’s not like, ‘Caribou is like beef, so let’s cook it like beef!’ It’s not beef. Seal is seal, *muktuk* is *muktuk*, and caribou is caribou even if it’s in the venison family—it’s its own thing. So the challenge for us is to serve this food the way it’s supposed to be served.”



Torched arctic char.

For Lévesque, who is offering his own twist on indigenous staples, like a caribou roast in Saskatoon blueberry *jus*, it’s also a lesson in simplicity—the emphasis is squarely on raw tonight.

“To really pay homage to the *muktuk* and narwal, you have to eat it raw, like the caribou. Once they hunt, they eat it raw or in stews,” he says. Same goes for vegetables, “There are no gardens in the North and the produce is so expensive up there, so we’re limiting ourselves to root vegetables carrots, potatoes, and rice. We’re trying to keep it simple.”



Raw arctic char.

A Taste of the Arctic is hosted by [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami](#), a national association that represents 55,000 Inuit living in 53 communities across the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (Northwest Territories), Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), and Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador).

For ITK President Natan Obed, it's a chance to debunk certain [myths](#) surrounding the food of the North, namely that seal hunting is cruel or unsustainable.

“We live with these animals and we harvest them sustainably and respectfully. It is central to our culture to eat these animals, but we don't see it in the way that many animal rights groups see it—that it's an injustice to the animals. There is an inherent respect that we have for the food that we eat, and for the way in which we treat our environment.”



Pan seared seal meat.

Seal meal was front and center at the event, along with other threatened species like [beluga whale](#) and [narwhal](#) which are cornerstones of the Northern diet.

Nicole Etitiq is a caseworker at the Nunavut Women's Correctional Center in Iqaluit, Nunavut. She's also a stand-up comedian, two occupations which she says are not as unrelated as they seem. “You need to have a good sense of humour to be a correctional caseworker,” Etitiq says.

“The difference between southerners and Inuit people, and indigenous people around the world, is that we try, as much as possible, to honour the animal before we kill it and after we kill it. It's a way of saying, ‘Thank you for providing for my family.’ A big thing in the North is that we try to share as much as we can with everyone in the community.”





Nicole Etitiq.

For Etitiq, this event is, above all, about promoting Inuit culture and enjoying some really good food. “This is a very important part of me just because I was raised to really respect animals and embrace the fact that I’m Innu. It’s really a treat for me to get country food like caribou or seal here.”

But it’s also about something far deeper for her, something which gets to the very core of how Inuit relate to food.

“Every culture has its creation myth. The story of Sedna is ours. She gives us animals. We would pray to her and she would allow us to get animals from the sea. After we kill a seal, typically, we put water in our mouths and put it into the seal’s mouth with our mouths, just to give it that last drink of fresh water to say, ‘Thank you for everything you’ve done’ kind of thing. It’s a holistic vision of food.”



Muktuk, or beluga blubber.

Etitiq was also quick to defuse the [controversy surrounding seal meat](#) and widely held misconceptions of Inuit people by fellow Canadians. “It bothers me when people with leather shoes criticize seal hunting,” Etitiq says. “Cows are herded and put into a huge farms where they’re bred and inbred, whereas we let the animals be wild and then we



catch them. We don't farm them. In that sense, we give them a life that they would have never had in factory farm.

“People think we go around clubbing cute-ass baby seals. It's not true—we let them live this great and fantastic life and then we kill them,” Etitiq concludes. “We're not people who are savages. Traditionally, the word ‘Eskimo’ means ‘savage raw meat eater’ and yes, we eat raw meat, but that's just because that's how it was back then and it still tastes amazing.”

*With additional reporting by Brigitte Noël.*

**Direct Link:** <https://munchies.vice.com/en/articles/seal-meat-narwhal-and-inuit-identity>

## **World's largest Metis beaded artwork now at CMHR**

Winnipeg Sun

First posted: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 03:02 PM CST | Updated: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 09:28 PM CST

The largest Metis beaded artwork in the world is now on display at the human rights museum.

The seven-metre tall octopus bag, also known as a fire bag, was created over eight months by Jennine Krauchi and her mother, Jenny Meyer. Students from Brooklands School and members of Manitoba's Metis community also contributed to the bag, which used thousands of antique fur-trade era beads from the mid-1800s to create a traditional Metis floral pattern.

The 27-kilogram bag is now on display at the museum as part of an exhibit about the displacement of Metis people who lived in communities on government road allowances.

Krauchi is giving public talks at the museum Thursday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. She'll be joined by Metis elder George Fleury and Lawrence Barkwell, coordinator of Metis heritage and history research at the Louis Riel Institute. The event is included in the cost of general admission.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.ottawasun.com/2016/03/09/alberta-parents-treated-deceased-sons-meningitis-with-maple-syrup-crown?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=recommend-](http://www.ottawasun.com/2016/03/09/alberta-parents-treated-deceased-sons-meningitis-with-maple-syrup-crown?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=recommend-)

[button&utm\\_campaign=Alberta+parents+treated+dead+son%27s+meningitis+with+maple+syrup%3A+Crown](#)

## Winnipeg artist puts Métis beadwork on display at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights

**Jennine Krauchi's octopus bag is thought to be the largest of its kind in the world**

By Stephanie Cram, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 09, 2016 6:43 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 09, 2016 4:56 PM CT



Most people attribute ornate beadwork to First Nation people, but Métis people also have a rich and unique history of making beautiful art with beads.

Artist Jennine Krauchi has been beading all her life, and her work is now featured at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

She was approached by the museum to make a larger than life octopus bag - an item that is deeply rooted in her Métis heritage.



Metis artist Jennine Krauchi standing with the octopus bag she created for the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. (John Woods/CMHR)

## What is an octopus bag?

"It's actually called a fire bag, and probably it was a European who started calling it an Octopus bag, because of all the fingers at the bottom," said Krauchi.

"A lot of Métis men carried these bags, and they were called fire bags for a reason because they carried their flint, their steel strikers, numerous things that would be needed for starting a fire."

The origins of the bag are unknown, but versions of it popped up across the country.

"You could tell each region, or who was doing a certain bag by the style of beadwork that they were doing," said Krauchi.

While each beadwork artist has their unique style, Métis beadwork stands apart because of the patterns and the colours of beads used.

Krauchi says Métis beadwork is unique because it combines two cultures - French embroidery patterns were combined with indigenous beading practices. And Métis beadwork patterns incorporate imagery from nature, such as flowers.



Octopus bags were carried by Metis men to store the needed supplies to start fires. This is a replica of the 26 foot tall bag on display at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. (Stephanie Cram)

"We were given the name, the flower beadwork people," said Krauchi.

Standing at 26 feet tall, the octopus bag on display at the museum is thought to be the largest of its type in the world.

With only four months to complete the bag, Krauchi reached out to her mother to lend a hand. The two worked tirelessly over the summer of 2014.

"I spent the majority of the summer under a hot, wool blanket beaded, trying to get this done," said Krauchi.

Unconsciously she included nine flowers in the design of the octopus bag, which later came to represent nine road allowance communities.

Up until the 1950s, Metis people lived in makeshift communities built on government-owned land, earning them the title of the road allowance people. The government would often force the communities off of the land using extreme measures, including bulldozing or burning down their houses.

One of the last Winnipeg road allowance communities was Rooster Town, situated where Grant Park is now. This community lasted until the late 1950s, when the community was kicked out and relocated to low-income housing.

"I'm very proud of this, because I think it represents us as Métis people... and the struggles we have gone through," said Krauchi.

"And that's why in one part of the octopus bag there is a rose that represents the survival of the Métis - I'm very, very proud of this piece."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/metis-beadwork-on-display-at-cmhr-1.3482213>

## Songs of the North

[Staff ~ The Prince Albert Daily Herald](#)

Published on March 08, 2016

### Yukon fiddlers release first new album since 2011

Five years after releasing their debut album, a folk group from the Yukon is finally ready for an encore.



Whitehorse-based folk trio Home Sweet Home -- Kate Weekes, Boyd Benjamin and Keitha Clark (from left) -- performs at Northern Lights Casino on March 14.

"There aren't a lot of people who know about Northern fiddling," fiddler Boyd Benjamin said.

“In Southern Canada fiddling is huge. There are a lot of Metis fiddlers, in the Prairie region they have their style as well, and then you come north and we have our own style. It's not Metis style, it's not Celtic style -- it's Northern style.”

Whitehorse folk trio Home Sweet Home -- guitarist Kate Weekes and fiddlers Benjamin and Keitha Clark -- is currently touring in support of *Fire on the Ice*, their first collection of songs since 2011's eponymous debut. They perform at the Northern Lights Casino on March 14.

Benjamin said the idea for the album came out of a summertime jam session.

“We got together and at the end of it we decided we have so much fun together, why don't we just make an album?” he said.

“We just wanted to make this happen for the love of the music and I suppose there's also a component in there to help preserve our traditional music.”

The record includes traditional Canadian fiddle music, as well as original compositions. One of the new songs tells the story of Andy Clark, a water bomber pilot who died during a routine flight near La Ronge in 2006.

Weekes learned about the accident while touring through the northern Saskatchewan town. She met with the pilot's friends and family to get a sense of his role in the community.

“I kind of fell in love with La Ronge while I was up there,” Weekes said.

“I just was really drawn into the community and made some really great friends and good connections. And everybody seems to have known Andy and they all had such great things to say about him and I felt like I was getting to meet a community that he had helped create and be part of.”

Home Sweet Home combines the Northern Canadian fiddle style of Benjamin, who hails from the Yukon community of Old Crow, and Shell Lake's Clark, who learned to fiddle on the Prairies.

“People's toes tap no matter where the tunes come from,” Clark said.

“Frankly, that's the bottom line is if you can bring joy to people and they're having a good time and it brings all kinds of different people together, then you know what? Mission accomplished. And if you're having a good time while you're doing it? Even better.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.paherald.sk.ca/News/Local/2016-03-08/article-4460361/Songs-of-the-North/1>

# Aboriginal Business & Finance

## Air Inuit to be 1st to own new freighter version of Bombardier Q300

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 04, 2016 8:06 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 04, 2016 8:06 AM CT

Air Inuit will be the launch customer for a cargo version of Bombardier's Q300 planes, the companies announced this week.

The freighter-converted Q300 turboprop aircraft is expected to have a cargo capacity of 12,500 pounds, with a large cargo door.

The airline says it expects the changes will make its cargo services faster and cheaper.



Pita Aatami, president and CEO of Air Inuit, says it expects the new Q300 cargo aircraft will make its cargo services faster and cheaper.

"We have no choice during the winter months [but] to use the cargo planes to bring our goods," said Pita Aatami, president and CEO of Air Inuit.

The airline currently has a fleet of 25 aircraft that includes Boeing 737-200C, Bombardier Q300 and Q100 turboprops, Hawker Siddeley 748, Twin Otter and King Air.

Aatami says he expects the new cargo planes in the spring of 2017.

Air Inuit, owned by Makivik Corporation, flies out of Montreal and serves the Inuit communities of Northern Quebec.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/air-inuit-bombardier-q300-cargo-1.3475518>



# Cap on aboriginal fisheries has to go, says Sto:lo rep



A policy under the Harper government that placed a cap on aboriginal fishery allocations is still a sore point among some Sto:lo who fish the Lower Fraser River

by Jennifer Feinberg - Chilliwack Progress

*posted Mar 8, 2016 at 1:00 PM— updated Mar 8, 2016 at 2:06 PM*

A policy under the Harper regime that placed a cap on aboriginal fishery allocations is still a sore point among First Nations who fish the Lower Fraser River.

A policy known as "End Point" first came to light during the Ahousaht court case over fishing rights, said Ken Malloway, a Sto:lo member of the Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance, and First Nations Fisheries Council of BC.

"We had been negotiating in good faith with federal Fisheries for years trying to secure a bigger allocation for pinks and chum salmon," he said.

They had a nagging feeling there was some foot-dragging going on when they tried to negotiate allocations for economic opportunities — or for food, social and ceremonial reasons.

"They'd make all kind of excuses. It always seemed like there was an obstacle in the way."

The existence of the policy came to light when the Ahousaht fishing trial reached the Supreme Court. A judgement in that case cemented First Nations' rights to fish in traditional territories and to sell that fish into the commercial marketplace.

"That's when we heard about this policy from the Conservative caucus, that placed limits on the catch for fisheries allocation under FSC (food, social and ceremonial) and economic opportunity fisheries.

"One of the things DFO has been told is that when they negotiate with First Nations, the honour of the crown is at stake. Well, we've been negotiating for 10 years in good faith. And all the while we find out they had the End Point policy in place and never told us."

It was a big problem a couple of years ago when there was a huge run of pink salmon, which are not a valued fish stock by the commercial industry, but they offered economic opportunity fisheries for the Japanese market. There was a huge surplus of about eight million pinks that year, and would have been very lucrative for struggling aboriginal communities, Malloway said.

Thankfully, under the new Trudeau regime, the government seems to be more receptive.

Asked to comment on the existence of a cap for First Nation fishery allocations, MP Mark Strahl would not address, confirm or deny a policy called "End Point."

"The Conservative government really replicated what the previous Liberal government had done — we established a fisheries management plan to ensure the fishery was sustainable," MP Strahl stated in an emailed statement.

"For First Nations fisheries, we were careful to respect court decisions regarding the constitutional rights to salmon for food, social, and ceremonial purposes and extended a commercial allocation to First Nations as well.

"We worked with aboriginal, commercial and recreational fishers to manage the fishery for the use and benefit of all Canadians today and for future generations," the MP continued. "Whatever the current government might say in private, I hope they will do the same and develop and implement a fisheries plan that is sustainable and fair for all Canadians."

Hearing there is a cap on aboriginal fisheries allocations was not a surprise to Doug Kelly, president of Sto:lo Tribal Council.

"It's nothing new," Kelly said. "They've always minimized the right of First Nations to fish, while maximizing the benefit to the commercial fishing industry, and recreational fishers. The stripe of the government might change but the government stays the same."



But Malloway said despite all the hurdles, he's been able to raise specific concerns about End Point multiple times with Hunter Tootoo, the new minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Coast Guard.

"We've had a lot of face time, and he's super aware that it's a concern," Malloway said about meeting with the new Fisheries minister. "End Point is something they have to get rid of. There is just no negotiating in good faith if there's a cap like this in place."

They're hoping for substantial change, and are feeling more optimistic.

"We still have a ways to go but we've been feeling better with the new government," Malloway said.

Kelly gets it, since Minister Tootoo, who is of Inuit ancestry, also "gets it."

"I can see why Ken is hopeful about the minister, and the Trudeau government, but until they move from rhetoric to action, and until we actually see the change, I'm still skeptical."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theprogress.com/news/371444871.html>

## CEMA still looking for funding

By [Vincent McDermott](#)

Tuesday, March 8, 2016 6:38:20 MST PM



A group of First Nation and Metis elders gather at a barbecue at the McMurray Metis office in Fort McMurray, Alta. on Thursday August 13, 2015. The group of hunters, trappers, fishermen and elders were participating in a consulting panel with CEMA. Vincent McDermott/Fort McMurray Today/Postmedia Network

Despite no guaranteed source of income, the Cumulative Environmental Management Association has not yet dissolved and is hoping the provincial government will reconsider its stance on pulling funding last year.

In a letter sent earlier this month to Environment Minister Shannon Phillips, CEMA's president Daniel Stuckless says their audit shows they do not have the resources to fulfill their mandate.

The auditor found that, prior to industry and the province cutting funding last fall, CEMA received 99.7 per cent of its funding from the federal and provincial governments, as well as from oil and gas companies.

Stuckless points out that many energy companies are pursuing projects that require engagement with CEMA as a condition of their approval.

"It is of course our desire to see the CEMA funded long term," wrote Stuckless, "however with that outcome unlikely, we felt it was prudent to inform you of the ramifications for those organizations whose project approvals are dependent on CEMA's continued existence."

In September, CEMA's stakeholders voted to continue operating for as long as possible, after years of struggling to secure a steady source of funding. Almost all of CEMA's \$5-million annual budget comes from oil companies.

Industry stakeholders, such as the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, argue the group is redundant and should be folded into initiatives like the Canadian Oil Sands Innovation Alliance and the federal-provincial Joint Oil Sands Monitoring program.

But CEMA's leadership has resisted this argument, arguing those groups are not strong forums for aboriginal communities. Environment Minister Shannon Phillips could not be reached for comment.

Stuckless says he knows the odds are against the organization. Earlier this week, Bill Werry, deputy environment minister, told Stuckless the province's stance would not change.

Yet, there are still some stakeholders from aboriginal groups, non-governmental organizations and the municipality interested in seeing it continue. There are even a few remaining energy companies, even though most have left.

"I don't anticipate the province's stance to change. I've been told not to expect it to change," he said. "We have no funding, but the current membership is not ready to part ways and is hoping some kind of resolution can be achieved."

Stuckless has also asked if the federal government would fulfill the void left by the province, but has not heard a response.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2016/03/08/cema-still-looking-for-funding>

## Aboriginal Community Development

### Anglican primate in Canada says bishop's same-sex marriage comments inaccurate

BY Michael MacDonald, The Canadian Press  
Posted Mar 4, 2016 2:00 pm EST

Last Updated Mar 4, 2016 at 4:40 pm EST



Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, the head of the Anglican Church of Canada, says a bishop in eastern Newfoundland has made inaccurate statements about the church's internal debate over the blessing of same-sex marriages. Hiltz is shown responding to media questions after the results of a resolution at the church's General Synod 2007 in Winnipeg Sunday, June 24, 2007.

The head of the Anglican Church of Canada says a bishop in eastern Newfoundland was wrong to suggest the church's hierarchy is unlikely to allow same-sex marriages largely because of resistance from aboriginal bishops.

"It's not only indigenous bishops who would hold a conservative view on the blessing of same-sex marriages," Most Rev. Fred Hiltz, primate of the Canadian wing of the church, said Friday.

"There are many others in the Canadian house of bishops who would also hold a conservative view ... To just say this is not likely to get approved ... because of the indigenous voice, I think that's just not accurate."

Peddle made his comments earlier this week during an interview broadcast across Newfoundland and Labrador by radio station VOCM. He could not be reached for comment Friday.

"So many of us are First Nations and aboriginal people (and) some of our bishops are First Nations ... They are not prepared to move forward with the marriage equality change," Peddle told VOCM.

“It is cultural and theological for them that marriage remain between a man and a woman. Most of the rest of us can see how there is a way to move forward, but they weren’t prepared to do that and they represent a big part of the house of bishops.”

There are 45 Anglican bishops in Canada. Four of them are aboriginal.

Hiltz, who is an archbishop, said the aboriginal bishops have made it clear the people they represent are predominantly opposed to same-sex marriage. But he stressed they aren’t the only bishops who hold this view.

In July, bishops from the Anglican Church of Canada and representatives from its clergy and laity will gather for a General Synod, which is the national organization’s highest governing body.

On the agenda is a resolution aimed at changing the church’s marriage canon to allow same-sex marriage. Altering the canon requires two-thirds support from each of the three main groups — bishops, clergy and laity — over the course of two meetings held three years apart.

Earlier this week, the bishops issued a statement saying it was unlikely the group would provide the number of votes needed to change the rules.

The statement did not mention where the aboriginal bishops stood, but it did cite “deep differences” within the group that left some feeling “mortified and devastated.”

“You can’t pin that to the three indigenous bishops,” Hiltz said, adding that the bishops’ statement does not mean the issue will be shelved.

In the end, he said, some bishops may change their minds because each will be guided by their own conscience, their interpretation of the debate and inspiration from prayer and the Holy Spirit.

As for Hiltz, he said he holds a “liberal view” of the issue, but he said he also has an obligation to focus on the unity of the church.

“My responsibility is to hold us all together and continue the conversation,” he said.

There are 1.6 million Canadians who identify themselves as Anglican, according to census figures. The church has 545,000 Canadians registered on its parish rolls.

The 85-million strong Anglican communion, a fellowship rooted in the Church of England, has been fracturing for decades over gay relationships and women’s ordination.

The Episcopal Church — the Anglican body in the United States —voted last year to authorize gay marriages in their churches.

Anglicans in Brazil, South Africa and some other countries have also expressed openness to accepting same-sex relationships.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.680news.com/2016/03/04/anglican-primate-in-canada-says-bishops-same-sex-marriage-comments-inaccurate/>

## **Cry for help after four teens take their own lives on Manitoba First Nation**

**Most recent victim will be buried Sunday on what would've been her 15th birthday**

By Karen Pauls, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 04, 2016 5:50 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 04, 2016 6:04 PM CT



An estimated 1,000 people from the Pimicikamak Cree Nation (Cross Lake First Nation) attended a suicide prevention walk Thursday. (Facebook)

Young people on the Pimicikamak Cree Nation are crying out for help after four teenagers killed themselves in less than three months.

"There's so much of it happening," said Amber Muskego, 17, who was close friends with some of the young people who have died since just before Christmas.

"I want everybody to help us try to fight this. We need a youth crisis centre."

Muskego and other sources tell CBC News the youngest victim was a girl who will be buried this Sunday – on what would have been her 15th birthday. The oldest was 18.

Two others have reportedly been sent to Winnipeg for help after they attempted take their lives.

'I want everybody to help us try to fight this. We need a youth crisis centre.'

*Amber Muskego, Pimicikamak Cree Nation*

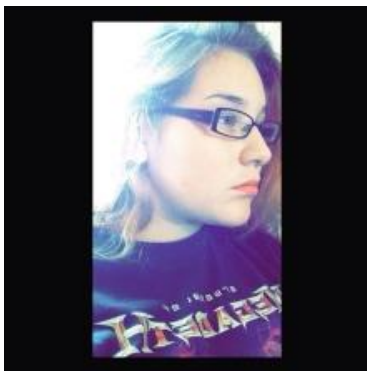
The community held a suicide prevention walk Thursday to draw attention to the crisis – and try to find healing.

"We met in the middle of our town," Muskego said.

"Everywhere, Christians were walking with the students, kids, everyone that wanted to go. They were pouring holy water on the ground, trying to bless the ground so no more suicides happen and our town gets out of grief."

Part of the problem, Muskego said, is that there is very little for young people to do. In the summer, they play baseball. In the winter, there's only hockey.

"Our town is invaded with drugs and alcohol. People get money, welfare, child tax. Some people don't even give kids their family allowance. They just go drink it up, slots, drugs, whatever they can get," she said.



Amber Muskego was close friends with some of the young people who have died in the last three months. She says the community needs a youth crisis centre. (Facebook)

"That's what's taking over our town. Our young people are running to drugs and alcohol."

An estimated 8,000 people live on the First Nation, which has an 80 per cent unemployment rate.

The father of a 15-year-old girl who died Jan. 20 agrees that the lack of opportunity is creating a feeling of hopelessness for young people in the community.

He and his daughter cannot be identified because she was in the care of Child and Family Services when she died.

"People are getting angry at what's going on. Finger-pointing, what is the root cause of this suicide in Cross Lake. Lack of recreational facilities for example, youth hang-outs, cultural centre, lack of opportunities in Cross Lake," he said.

The man says he doesn't even know yet how his daughter died – and those questions are haunting him.

"I keep hearing conflicting stories. One says she hung herself. The other says she overdosed. That's why I'm waiting for the autopsy report. It is so hard. Ever since I lost my daughter, life is turned upside for me and for my family," he said.

"A few factors come into play, like bullying. My daughter was in the foster home. She would've come home on Feb. 1 back to my care. I told her that, she was looking forward to coming home and then something happened."



The community of Pimicikamak Cree Nation (Cross Lake First Nation) held a suicide prevention walk Thursday after the deaths of four young people who took their own lives recently. (photo courtesy Cynthia Robinson )

There is a concern that more young people will be lost, so mental health workers are in the schools, working with students considered high-risk, said Cynthia Robinson, of Cross Lake Health Services.

She said there's a need for even more mental health professionals in the community approximately 700 km north of Winnipeg.

"Most of the workers feel overwhelmed, they're always worried about the young people and we are trying our best to help them, encouraging them to call somebody, not to keep quiet about how they're feeling," she said.

Robinson was one of the people who organized the suicide prevention walk. It was meant both to support the grieving families and to reach out to anyone struggling and considering suicide.

"It was very emotional and everybody tried to comfort them and talking to them, encouraging them, showing their support. It's all we can really do at this moment. There's no words to say, to comfort a family that's very heartbroken right now," she said.

"It was an overwhelming feeling, like you can feel the love that everybody came together to make it work."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/pimicikamak-cross-lake-suicide-1.3477148>

# Thunder Bay launches 'Welcome Project' for First Nations youth

By Amy Hadley, CBC News Posted: Mar 04, 2016 7:00 PM ET| Last Updated: Mar 07, 2016 11:31 AM ET

The City of Thunder Bay announced plans Friday to create a new educational video series to help welcome First Nations youth to the city.

The Welcome Project will consist of four documentary videos, as well as a related website, containing information that will help young people and their families to navigate and adjust to the city.

The films are aimed at First Nations high school, university and college students, said city clerk John Hannam.

The videos are geared towards "helping them connect with the community, connect with the supports and services that are available to them, and hopefully better prepare them for life in an urban environment.

"We've known for awhile that students struggle with adapting to urban life when they come from smaller communities," Hannam said.

The videos will build on the city's earlier Walk A Mile film project, a series of short documentaries aimed at improving race relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Thunder Bay, he said.

While the Walk A Mile series sparked conversation, The Welcome Project will take the next step, by responding to the needs of First Nations youth, said filmmaker Michelle Derosier, who is producing the films.

"I think that as a community we are well aware ... of some very, very serious issues that we are dealing with as Canadians, and certainly in this community," she said, pointing to concerns over student safety, and the current student deaths inquest unfolding in Thunder Bay.

Derosier said she will be reaching out to community members for their input on what issues the videos need to address.

The city is currently looking for sponsors to help pay for the films. The plan is to have the videos completed in time to welcome new students in the fall, and to screen them at the annual Fall Feast and Festival of Services in September.



**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/welcome-project-thunder-bay-first-nations-students-1.3476601>

## Open-minded travellers can experience a week on a remote First Nations reserve

The youth of a fly-in First Nations reserve in northern Ontario are inviting 25 people to come on a week-long trip to stay in their homes and share in their daily activities.



Camille-Sophie (here at age 12), has been coming to KI every year since the age of 7 with her mom, trip co-ordinator Andrée Cazabon.

**By:** [Jennifer Bain](#) Travel, Published on Sat Mar 05 2016

Wanted: 25 intrepid travellers for Canada's most unique vacation.

The youth of [Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig First Nation](#) (KI) are once again inviting people to experience life for a week on their remote, fly-in reserve in northwestern Ontario.

“When people travel, they don’t just want to see new things, they want to be new themselves,” says trip co-ordinator Andrée Cazabon, a Toronto filmmaker with [Productions Cazabon](#).

“They want to transform themselves through a trip. This is a life-changing trip — and it’s also a lot of fun.”

On the [Reconciliation Trip itinerary](#): Truth-telling, active listening, bridge building (figuratively speaking), creating transformative relationships, fishing, swimming, games, community infrastructure visits, laughing.

You'll examine deep social issues, challenge stereotypes and racist attitudes, and explore reconciliation, which in a Canadian context "is about truth telling and about understanding our collective history together."

Explains Cazabon: "Reconciliation is about righting the wrongs of the past that were done by Canada to indigenous people and creating a positive relationship together. It's also about understanding treaties and how we agreed to live in mutual respect."

Canada has a lot to learn from Australia, she points out, which has an impressive reconciliation program to encourage unity and respect between aboriginal and non-indigenous people.

Cazabon has been working with the KI community for almost a decade and produced *3rd World Canada*. The [2010 documentary](#) is about the aftermath of the suicide of three parents and the children they left behind.

Canadians think nothing of travelling to Africa, Asia or South America to build schools and orphanages, trek to poverty-stricken villages or take selfies with the locals.

But, as Cazabon ruefully notes, when we think about entering a reserve in our own country, questions of safety always come up.

"That was a big barrier," she acknowledges.

When the youth of KI decided they wanted to invite people to visit their isolated community of 1,300 residents, she agreed to be the co-ordinator as long as they took the lead.

The fear factor went both ways.

Older community members wanted to protect the youth from the prospect of "having 25 Canadians stay in our homes, judge us and hate us."

The youth forged bravely ahead that first year, 2013, deciding if just one Canadian heeded their call, the trip would be a success.

The [summer trip was a hit](#) and now attracts an eclectic mix of travellers. Last year one family brought their 9 and 11-year-old kids.

It wasn't part of the reconciliation trip, but Sophie, Countess of Wessex, and Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne visited the reserve for two days in 2014 with a delegation of high-profile women.

This year, Toronto Mayor John Tory is considering coming, and the youth plan to ask Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's wife Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau to join the trip.

“The fact that they can now write to the prime minister’s wife shows they feel like this barrier between them and Canada is open now,” says Cazabon, adding “it’s the mix of leaders and ordinary Canadians sitting down and talking about reconciliation that helps us get to a place of change.”

The youth leaders who run the trip are aged 8 to 29, but most are in their early teens. They put guests up in community homes, where running water, electricity, sewage systems and Internet aren’t guaranteed, or places like the church, which has showers.

“It’s an incredible act of generosity,” points out Cazabon, “because nobody in the community has an extra bedroom and 200 people are wait-listed for housing.”

Meals are served at the community grounds. There is a 10 p.m. curfew.

There will be campfires, stories, music and drumming, and visits to nearby [Wapekeka First Nation](#) and [Bearskin Lake First Nation](#).

Guests will hang out at the beach and explore the boreal forest, listen, learn, laugh, share and have fun.

“We want them to see our living conditions and the hope we still have,” KI youth leader Justin Beardy says in a news release.

This “expectation-free event” costs \$3,200 and is open to everyone.

Like any trip, Cazabon stresses, it’s about “coming in friendship” and not about “doing something to the community or for the community.”

The modest hope is that when the trip is over, people will share their “memories and good times” with their circles and help “change our country.”

There may or may not be a trip next year.

“For the community,” says Cazabon, “it’s about ‘Do we have the stamina to do this again?’”

Grab this chance while you can.

*Jennifer Bain is the Star’s travel editor.*

## **When You Go**

The youth of Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig (KI) invite 25 people to live on their remote, fly-in, northwestern Ontario reserve from July 14 to 21 for this year’s reconciliation trip. The all-inclusive trip costs \$3,200 and includes flights to Thunder Bay and KI’s Big Trout Lake Airport. Lodging is in the community. There will be visits to

Wapekeka and Bearskin Lake First Nation. Many activities are planned and the goal is to build relations and mutual respect and share in stories, traditions, history and collective hopes for the future. Find out more at [reconciliationeducation.ca](http://reconciliationeducation.ca).

□ Multimedia clips from this year's trip will be part of the Grade 10 truth and reconciliation unit this fall entitled *4 Seasons of Reconciliation* that's being piloted in 12 Ontario school boards and expanding to Alberta and Saskatchewan.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/life/travel/2016/03/05/open-minded-travellers-can-experience-a-week-on-a-remote-first-nations-reserve.html>

## **'Bridging the gap' between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals**

[Lisa Goudy](#)

Published on March 06, 2016

### **Aboriginal Awareness Week taking place from Monday to Thursday this week in Caronport**

Kallie Wood is a First Nations' '60s Scoop Child.



A tipi is erected in Edwards Chapel at Briercrest College and Seminary in March 2014. The event kicked off Aboriginal Awareness Week at the school.

"I was taken at birth and assimilated and adopted into white culture," said Wood, Aboriginal director at Caronport High School and Briercrest College and Seminary. "I guess I feel very humbled and very blessed with the life that I've had as far as having opportunity to basically live both sides of the coin. So I was raised in a white environment but am First Nation."

She added that her experiences have made her a "more caring and giving" person regarding "the care and candor that you have going forward and to have a better understanding and the forgiveness of people for their stories."

Her experiences make this week even more important for her. This week is the fourth annual Aboriginal Awareness Week in Caronport with a theme of, 'Your part in reconciliation.'

"It's about bridging that gap between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and it's to come to a better understanding about the present complexity that we have right now in Canada. We have so much information out there right now about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the ... missing and murdered Aboriginal women, the foster care issues," said Wood.

"This just going to hopefully gain insight for people so they can be better equipped. You fear what you don't know, so this is an opportunity to be a part of it."

The week is filled with events, with two main public events happening on Wednesday night and Thursday night. Wednesday night is the Aboriginal Awareness Week Restoration Cup Hockey Challenge at Barkman Arena at 6 p.m. The first 100 people in the door will receive a prize.

"Our special guests for the event are Fred Sasakamoose and Fred is the first NHL First Nation man ever to play in the NHL. So he's 82-years-old," said Wood. "His grandson, Isaiah Tootoosis is also joining us and Isaiah is the young Aboriginal boy that played in 'The Revenant' with Leonardo DiCaprio. He was his young son in the movie. So he's going to be here and he's going to be playing actually in the hockey game."

Hockey Canada will also be in attendance and Sasakamoose will have an autograph table and a meet-and-greet session. The Briercrest Clippers will also be playing.

On Thursday evening, the Jolly Aboriginal Scholarship Concert will take place in the Hildebrand Chapel at 7 p.m. Admission is by donation.

"Again Isaiah Tootoosis will be there and interviewed on stage and he will have an autograph signing following that event. Andrea Menard will be there," Wood, adding that Sasakamoose will speak as well.

"I will be doing my own story on the '60s Scoop through song."

During the week, there will be an outdoor tipi on Wednesday and Thursday with cultural food, The Creator's Sacrifice series depicting the Easter story in Room 160, a tipi raising on Monday night, guests from across Canada to speak to students and mission representatives from Aboriginal communities on Wednesday and Thursday.

Briercrest's dance team, Refined/Undignified, will also perform on Tuesday night at 8 p.m. in their final show of 'I Am Liberty' at The Landing.

"It's a great show. It's about sex trafficking," said Wood. "It fits in with missing and murdered indigenous women, so we're pretty excited about that."

For more information, visit Briercrest's website at [briercrest.ca](http://briercrest.ca).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.mjtimes.sk.ca/News/Local/2016-03-06/article-4456752/Bridging-the-gap-between-Aboriginals-and-nonAboriginals/1>

## **One Company's Solution to Canada's Aboriginal Water Crisis: 60,000 Bottles of 'Activate Vitamin Drinks'**

By [Hilary Beaumont](#)

March 8, 2016 | 1:05 pm

A Canadian company is giving out 60,000 bottles of vitamin water as a "band aid" solution to a water crisis that's plagued some First Nations in Canada for 20 years.

Not everyone is happy, though.

Last week, Unique Foods Canada Inc. announced it was donating 30,000 bottles of its Activate Vitamin Drinks to Six Nations First Nation in Ontario "as a catalyst of a clean water movement for First Nations communities across Ontario and the rest of Canada."

The company plans to announce another donation of 30,000 bottles, this time to Shoal Lake 40, an Aboriginal community that sits on the Manitoba-Ontario border and that has been on a boil water advisory for more than 18 years.

Six Nations Chief Ava Hill applauded the donation, saying in an interview, "we're very grateful for it." But the gesture isn't exactly garnering excitement from residents of Shoal Lake 40, who worry about garbage mounting on the island community, and that someone might drown while trying to deliver bottles across the ice road, which is melting.



"Oh heck! So we don't need a water treatment plant, we'll just get water bottles sent," Daryl Redsky, who lives in Shoal Lake 40, quipped.

"It isn't a long-term solution. I mean, it's a long-term benefit to the company, but it's not a long-term solution to our community."

The vitamin water — which is a bottle of filtered water that comes with a separate vitamin mixture that includes stevia — isn't meant to be a long-term solution, Unique Foods spokesperson Josh Silver told VICE News. It's intended to spur the federal government into action — while making the company look good, too.

In Canada, the lack of safe drinking water on Aboriginal reserves has garnered increasing attention. There are more than [130 boil water advisories](#) on 87 First Nations — not including those in British Columbia — as of December 31.

Enza Ruscillo, with the charity Brands for Canada, told VICE News the organization approached Unique Foods with the idea in hopes it would "make a dent in the issue."

"Nobody is selling product and making a profit on this," added Silver, who called the donation a "band aid" solution.

Six Nations Chief Ava Hill, who was quoted in the company's press release, told VICE News that she was away when the company reached out to make a donation, so it was arranged through her staff.

"Businesses are always promoting themselves," she said. "We appreciate the donation they made to our community, and they're also getting the message out there that's going along with what the prime minister said, that there has to be clean water in all the First Nations across the country."



Six Nations, located near Hamilton, Ontario, opened a new water treatment plant in 2014 to provide clean water by pipe to 9 percent of residents, but distribution of that water is still a problem.

Shoal Lake 40, on the other hand, has been asking for a water treatment plant and an access road dubbed Freedom Road for years.

Shoal Lake 40 resident Samantha Redsky raised concerns about the extra garbage on the isolated reserve, which already relies on bottled water shipments, and suggested the company had not thought the logistics of the delivery through.

"Not everyone is willing to come across [the ice road] and risk their lives while making a delivery," she said. "That is what they'll be doing if they're going to deliver water on an ice road that's not really safe any more."

Nine people in Shoal Lake 40 have died falling through the ice, which is especially treacherous in the spring and fall.

But Silver said he had heard a lot of positive feedback about the company's donation.

"I respect where [Daryl Redsky's] coming from because if I was living in that community, I'd feel frustrated as well," said Silver. "But in my humble opinion, he may be a little bit misguided because what he's suggesting is, yes, the government may not be fulfilling the need of what they need to do, ok, so what should the rest of us do? We should sit around and do nothing?"

"We can't just rely on the government," Silver continued. "Individuals and companies as well need to get involved."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [vowed](#) during his election campaign last year to end boil water advisories on First Nation reserves within five years.

**Direct Link:** <https://news.vice.com/article/one-companys-solution-to-canadas-aboriginal-water-crisis-60000-bottles-of-activate-vitamin-drinks>

## **New Canadians know too little about indigenous peoples: Reis Pagtakhan**

**Canada needs to adopt Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations for immigration system**

By Reis Pagtakhan, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 08, 2016 9:28 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 08, 2016 9:30 PM CT



John McCallum, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship announced Tuesday Canada will seek to admit a record number of immigrants as the Liberal government shifts its focus onto family reunification and the settlement of refugees. (Nathan Denette/Canadian Press)

The recent announcement by Immigration Minister John McCallum that the federal government will be changing Canada's citizenship laws fulfills a number of the Liberal government's campaign promises. However, these proposals fail to deliver on one of Prime Minister Trudeau's main promises—to adopt all of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada that arose from their investigation into Canada's residential schools.

What does Canada's history of residential schools have to do with Canadian citizenship laws? I confess, I did not know of the connection until I read the newsletter of immigration lawyer Ronalee Carey earlier this month.

In her newsletter, Carey points out that the last two recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission call for the federal government to change the Citizenship Oath and to revise the study guide and citizenship test for soon-to-be new Canadians.

The recommended changes call for the inclusion of more information about Canada's treaties with indigenous peoples and the history of residential schools.

On the Citizenship Oath, the Commission specifically recommends that a new line be added in which new citizens would agree to "faithfully observe the laws of Canada including treaties with indigenous people."



Reis Pagtakhan is an immigration lawyer with Aikins Law in Winnipeg. (Supplied)

The parts of the Citizenship Oath in which new Canadians swear allegiance to the Queen and agree to fulfil their duties as Canadians would still remain.

If the government is serious about adopting the Commission's recommendations, why has the government not made these changes at this time? I do not see the reason to delay this.

In any event, whatever the government's reason for not making these changes now, the bigger question is: Why are these changes necessary at all?

As someone who was born and raised in Canada, I learned very little in school about the treaties made with First Nations. Outside of being taught the British and French defeated the "Indians," the only other thing I learned about our indigenous peoples is that reserves were created.

I certainly did not learn that the treaties with First Nations carried with them ongoing obligations. The Commission's report discusses the "urgent need for more dialogue between Aboriginal peoples and new Canadians."

Now, while there is need for greater understanding among all Canadians, what does this have to do with the Citizenship Oath?

To get down to the reason behind the proposed change to the oath, one only has to look at the study guide soon-to-be citizens receive for their citizenship test.

Unfortunately, many of the questions and answers in the study guide do not truly convey the rights and obligations of Canadians. Questions like—How are members of Parliament chosen? What does the term "Inuit" mean? What is the significance of the discovery of insulin by Sir Frederick Banting and Charles Best? What provinces are referred to as the Atlantic provinces?—hardly convey information that is beyond that of trivia.

The fact that these questions are asked in multiple choice format do not add to any sense that Canadian citizenship is serious business. Becoming a citizen of this country should be serious business. Canadian citizenship conveys not only rights and freedoms but obligations to be good citizens.

Instead of requiring soon-to-be Canadians to write a test that is nothing more than an elongated game of Trivial Pursuit (a game invented by Canadians by the way), a better solution would be to use the time spent sitting in the test room discussing the importance of being a Canadian.

Instead of testing people on how members of Parliament are chosen, let's use that time to discuss with them the importance of parliamentary democracy.

Instead of defining the term "Inuit," let's talk about the Inuit's past and present contributions to Canada.

Instead of telling people that the discovery of insulin treats diabetes, let's talk about the importance of Canadian scientific discoveries and how the Canada of today can foster innovation.

Instead of simply indicating that treaties with indigenous Canadians "were not always respected" as is the case in the current study guide—let's talk about why these treaties were not respected, the issues created by not respecting them, the challenges these issues pose to our society, and the opportunities we have together in the future.

The purpose of our immigration system is to attract the best and brightest from around the world to be our citizens. We should give the best and brightest the ability to make critical decisions about Canada, not drown them in reams of trivia.

*Reis Pagtakhan is an immigration lawyer with Aikins Law in Winnipeg.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/new-canadians-know-little-indigenous-1.3482694>

## Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

### Alexander First Nation chief charged with sexual assault

[Claire Theobald](#)

Published on: March 4, 2016 | Last Updated: March 4, 2016 5:28 PM MST



Chief Kurt Burnstick of the Alexander First Nation has been charged after an adult woman claims to have been sexually assaulted. John Lucas / Edmonton Journal

Morinville RCMP have charged an Alexander First Nation chief with sexual assault.

The man was charged after an adult woman reported she had been sexually assaulted.

The investigation involving Morinville RCMP and the Edmonton General Investigation Section began in December 2015.

RCMP say the man is known to the woman.

Kurt Burnstick has been released with a promise to appear on April 14 in Morinville provincial court.

**Direct Link:** <http://edmontonjournal.com/news/crime/first-nations-chief-charged-with-sexual-assault-north-of-edmonton>

## **Two more First Nations courts proposed in British Columbia**

SUNNY DHILLON

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Mar. 06, 2016 7:08PM EST

Last updated Sunday, Mar. 06, 2016 7:14PM EST

Two aboriginal groups are exploring plans for First Nations courts in their communities – a tool proponents say can be more effective than standard criminal courts.

A September briefing note from the B.C. Ministry of Justice released through freedom of information says the Tsilhqot'in National Government and Sto:lo Tribal Council are considering establishing such courts.

B.C. already has four First Nations courts. They differ from standard courts in that they include First Nations elders in the process and offer healing plans to help the offender's rehabilitation and repair the harm done to the community by the crimes.

Chief Joe Alphonse, tribal chairman of the Tsilhqot'in National Government, which is based in Williams Lake and represents several First Nations communities, said the regular criminal justice system has not worked, as evidenced by the region's high crime rate.

“Right now, you throw somebody in jail for six months and they just become better and better at their craft because you're enabling them to become educated by real criminals,” he said in an interview. “Things just keep escalating and you want to stop that escalation from happening and that's what this process will enable us to do.”

Chief Alphonse said it is unclear when any Tsilhqot'in court would open. He said he has been in contact with B.C. Provincial Court Chief Judge Thomas Crabtree and has been invited to visit some of the other First Nations courts but has not yet been able to do so.

Chief Alphonse said a system in which offenders speak with community elders rather than a judge they may have never met could prove beneficial.

"We don't want to adopt a B.C. process or a Canadian process. We don't want our programs to look exactly like that. Why would we? It doesn't work for us," he said.

Dana-Lyn Mackenzie, associate director of indigenous legal studies at the University of British Columbia's school of law, said the four First Nations courts currently in operation in B.C. are sentencing courts. An offender has to plead guilty to go through the process.

Ms. Mackenzie, who also practises part-time at the university's Indigenous Community Legal Clinic and has appeared in First Nations court on behalf of clients, said the four courts, which are in North Vancouver, New Westminster, Kamloops, and Duncan, have some differences. For example, she said, the North Vancouver court will hear cases involving indictable offences, while the New Westminster court will only hear matters that have no prospect of jail time.

The First Nations courts are in provincial courthouses and typically sit one day a month in one courtroom. Ms. Mackenzie said B.C. could use more First Nations courts – she said Surrey has a particular need – and they should sit more often.

"When you have a dedicated Crown and judges who are dedicated to the principles and the idea behind First Nations court, they can allow the offender to take their time and work with elders and work with community members," she said in an interview. "...In Provincial Court, you're very pressed for time."

Ms. Mackenzie said she has appeared at the First Nations court in North Vancouver and, unlike in standard courts, the judge sits at a table with the offender, counsel and elders rather than at the bench.

Ms. Mackenzie said she has no statistics on recidivism rates for offenders who go through First Nations court, but said anecdotal evidence leads her to believe they make a difference.

"I would think there is a much higher success rate because it's a more restorative, healing approach to sentencing. ... I think it allows the offender to really come to terms with what they did and realize how it impacts their community," she said.

A Provincial Court spokesperson said it could not provide statistics or information on First Nations courts, as the chief judge was unavailable.

A B.C. Ministry of Justice spokesperson said in a statement that the ministry will soon publish a specialized courts strategy that “will guide the consideration for the development of new specialized courts and assist communities in assessing which justice solutions may be the most responsive and effective for them.”

The spokesperson said any decision to create a specialized court is not made by government alone. The ministry works with the judiciary, community and other justice system stakeholders to “evaluate requests, assess community needs and consider the availability of resources.”

The Ministry of Justice briefing note was written in preparation for 30-minute meetings with the Tsilhqot’in National Government and Sto:lo Tribal Council on Sept. 9, 2015.

The Sto:lo Tribal Council, which is based in Agassiz, did not return messages seeking comment.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/two-more-first-nations-courts-proposed-in-british-columbia/article29043462/>

## Police often assume worst of aboriginal youths: report

Posted: Tuesday, March 8, 2016 6:00 am | *Updated: 6:03 am, Tue Mar 8, 2016.*

**By Carl Clutche, CJ staff**

Despite the existence of sensitivity training for police officers, aboriginal teens and young adults feel “targeted” by police and believe that officers “assume the worst” about them during confrontations, says a new report about aboriginals and the justice system.

Released Monday, the report by Ontario’s Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth is the result of input from 150 Aboriginal Peoples aged 15-29 who took part in a 2014 Thunder Bay forum into justice issues.

“It was clear that aboriginal young people feel disconnected and intimidated by the justice system, and they are calling for transformative change,” the report found.

The forum, which began as a discussion about a shortage of aboriginals on criminal and coroner’s inquest juries, heard that police often assume that aboriginals “were drunk or taking illegal drugs.”

The report added: “Aboriginals believe that many professionals (judges, police, and lawyers) who work in the justice system lack an understanding of aboriginal legacy



issues and its ongoing impact on the daily lives of many aboriginal people, including poverty and addiction.”

In the wake of the report, police said Monday efforts to address the concerns it raises are ongoing.

“We believe that trust is paramount in building relationships with aboriginal youth,” said Thunder Bay police spokesman Chris Adams.

“Our commitment to outreach can be seen through our aboriginal liaison officers and school resource officers.”

Adams added: “We also have been very aware that there are challenges for anyone in a position of authority to create positive interactions with youth at risk.”

Ontario Provincial Police, which established its Aboriginal Policy Bureau in 2009, says its officers receive native-awareness training.

“Progress has been made, but we know there is a long road ahead,” said Bureau Supt. Mark Pritchard, who is based at OPP’s Orillia headquarters.

As part of the training OPP officers receive, “participants are introduced to relevant cultural, historical and traditional knowledge relating to Aboriginal Peoples.”

**Direct Link:** [http://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/local/police-often-assume-worst-of-aboriginal-youths-report/article\\_85b88c36-e4ec-11e5-bf7b-b36be0c2237f.html](http://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/local/police-often-assume-worst-of-aboriginal-youths-report/article_85b88c36-e4ec-11e5-bf7b-b36be0c2237f.html)

## **First Nations student deaths inquest: Public being 'cut out', lawyer says**

**'This is not supposed to be a secret proceeding,' Julian Falconer tells presiding coroner**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 09, 2016 7:20 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 09, 2016 11:56 AM ET



Nishnawbe Aski Nation lawyer Julian Falconer says he feels 'stifled' and 'muzzled' at the inquest into seven First Nations student deaths in Thunder Bay. (submitted by Falconers LLP)

An Ontario coroner is being accused of "suppressing and keeping secret what should be public" at an inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students in Thunder Bay.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation lawyer Julian Falconer made the remarks against presiding coroner Dr. David Eden during proceedings on Tuesday. Eden denied the allegations.

The inquest is examining the deaths of seven students from remote First Nations who died while attending high school in Thunder Bay.

"I do not believe it is appropriate to cut out the public," Falconer said after asking his comments to be put on the record. "This is not supposed to be a secret proceeding."

The arguments came as Falconer was seeking to introduce a 2008 letter from himself, on behalf of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, to the coroner's office asking for an inquest to be held.

## **'Off the record'**

Falconer said coroner's counsel told him "in the hallway" that the coroner would not allow the letter into evidence.

"No ruling was made on this matter," Eden said. "If you want to file a motion, you may do so off the record."

The legal arguments delayed the testimony of Nishnawbe Aski Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler.

"I fear with his schedule, [Fiddler's] ability to testify is in jeopardy," Falconer said.



Alvin Fiddler, the Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, says he's disappointed legal arguments delayed his testimony on Tuesday. (Alvin Fiddler)

Fiddler, who volunteered to testify, said it was disappointing waiting all afternoon and not being able to give his evidence.

"I just think that this whole process has become so cumbersome that it's so legalistic," Fiddler said. "To try to keep these proceedings private and away from the public is something we will not tolerate."

Nearly an entire week of testimony last month was derailed as lawyers held private meetings. Neither the coroner's office nor any of the lawyers will say what was discussed.

The inquest is scheduled to resume on Wednesday with testimony from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-deaths-inquest-public-cut-out-1.3482290>

## **Canada Reads 2016 novel Birdie takes flight as law school text**

Book offers a different way to discuss and observe Indigenous laws, say author Tracey Lindberg

By Cathy Alex, CBC News Posted: Mar 10, 2016 6:00 AM ET| Last Updated: Mar 10, 2016 12:31 PM ET

Birdie is one of five books vying for top spot in Canada Reads 2016, but the work of fiction is already taking flight at four Canadian law schools, where it is being taught as part of the curriculum.

"I propose that Birdie be approached as a Cree law text," wrote Val Napoleon, the Director of the Indigenous Law Research Unit at the Faculty of Law, University of Victoria.

The book tells the story of a Cree woman named Bernice Meetoos, who leaves her community in northern Alberta on a journey to find home and hope, after a childhood shattered by sexual abuse. Along the way, she receives help and support from several significant women in her life.

Birdie is the first novel by Tracey Lindberg, who is also a law professor at Athabasca University and the University of Ottawa.

Her hope is that the book encourages people to think about the law, not only as a series of rights, but also as a set of responsibilities and obligations to other people, and to the natural world.

"It provides a different on-ramp for us to have a conversation about law," said Lindberg, "and I'm hoping that Birdie gives people an idea of what some of the practices will be."

Her own teaching experience has shown her that law students are open to the existence and authority of Indigenous laws and orders, but rarely get a chance to observe those laws in action.

"There are not just the common law, and le droit civil in Canada

- Elysia Petrone Reitberger

For instance, there are no Cree law books to refer to, and in some cases the impact of colonization has pushed even the oral traditions underground, said Lindberg, who hails from the Kelly Lake Cree Nation, in northern B.C.

"I think that, in its best composition, Indigenous laws and legal orders look like the responsibilities we have between relatives," she said.

"The women surrounding her [Bernice] start to ensure that she is fed, that she is clothed. They are living a lawful life."

Birdie is not part of the curriculum for Elysia Petrone Reitberger, who is in her final year of studies at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay.

Many more laws

But, she said she would be thrilled to study the book in more detail in a classroom setting.

Reading the novel was a gift, she said, and she appreciated its many layers, languages - both Cree and English words are used - and teachings.

"There are not just the common law, and le droit civil in Canada. This land has many more laws that are out there, and can be taught and I think there's almost a responsibility for us to learn them, and I think we'll be a better country for it," said Reitberger.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/canada-reads-birdie-law-school-1.3483814>

## **Prison watchdog says rising number of Indigenous people entering system remains "troubling"**

National News | March 10, 2016 by [APTN National News](#)



#### **APTN National News**

Canada's prison watchdog says he remains concerned with the rising number of Indigenous people entering the prison system.

Correctional Investigator Howard Sapers released his office's latest annual report Thursday in Ottawa.

"The situation facing Indigenous peoples of Canada in conflict with the law remains troubling," said Sapers.

Sapers' report said Indigenous offenders make up a quarter of all inmates held in federal prisons.

The number of Indigenous women entering the federal prison system is also growing, the 2014-2015 annual report found. Indigenous women now make up 37 per cent of all women serving federal sentences.

Sapers' report also found that Indigenous inmates were more likely to be put into maximum security prisons, spend more time in segregation and serve more of their sentences behind bars compared to other inmates.

"A history of disadvantage follows Indigenous people into prison and often defines their differential outcomes and experiences there," said Sapers, in a statement. "The issues that give rise to their disproportionate rates of incarceration require far more attention from our federal correctional service as it manages the sentences of Indigenous men and women."

The report also calls for an end of solitary confinement for mentally ill inmates and for segregation to last no more than 30 days.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/03/10/prison-watchdog-says-rising-number-of-indigenous-people-entering-system-remains-troubling/>

## **Aboriginal Education & Youth**

### **Canada still discriminating against First Nations kids, advocate says**

**'The federal government doesn't want to do anything in the short-term,' says Cindy Blackstock**

By Tim Fontaine, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 04, 2016 8:18 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 04, 2016 5:02 PM ET



First Nations Child and Family Caring Society Caring Society Executive Director Cindy Blackstock speaks about the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal regarding discrimination against First Nations children in care, during a news conference in Ottawa, Tuesday January 26, 2016. THE CANADIAN PRESS (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

Even with a recent landmark ruling, Canada hasn't done anything to stop discriminating against First Nations kids, child advocate Cindy Blackstock says.

On January 26 the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal found that the federal government discriminates against children living on reserves by failing to provide them with the same quality of welfare services available to children elsewhere in the country.

That decision came with an order to stop the practice and was followed by a vow from the government not to appeal the decision.

But Blackstock, executive director of the First Nation Child and Family Caring Society — which launched the initial human rights complaint against Ottawa in 2007 — said nothing has happened.

"The federal government doesn't want to do anything in the short-term," Blackstock said. "They want to just continue with study and that makes me nervous."

## **Immediate relief requested**

Weeks after the tribunal's decision, the First Nation Child and Family Caring Society submitted documents outlining what the federal government could do to address the lack of services for child welfare systems on reserves, including steps that could immediately be taken.

These first steps — outlined on the Caring Society's website — include an injection of \$109 million for First Nation child welfare agencies across Canada and a public announcement that the federal government will begin working with agencies to reform the on-reserve child welfare system.

However, Blackstock claims the federal government has only sent a letter that indicated that they're studying the issue first.

"What's really important is not what government says. What's really important is what government does when it comes to First Nations kids," said Blackstock.

The Assembly of First Nations said they will also be filing submissions on immediate relief to the tribunal, however, they wouldn't say what those recommendations will be.

## Children at risk

CBC asked Indigenous Affairs what action has been taken since the tribunal decision. A spokesperson emailed a link to a joint statement first issued by Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould in January.

'These little kids are out there and they're still suffering from this discrimination.'

- *Cindy Blackstock, First Nation Child and Family Caring Society*

"Child and family services issues are complex and require constructive dialogue through a renewed relationship built on trust and partnership," the statement reads. "Together, we will make the right changes for better outcomes for First Nations children."

Blackstock says the government is simply stalling and the lack of movement is putting First Nation children at risk.

"These little kids are out there and they're still suffering from this discrimination."

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Hear Cindy Blackstock in conversation with Rosanna Deerchild, on [Unreserved](#), CBC Radio One, 7:00 p.m. Sunday and 1:00 p.m. Tuesday.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/canada-still-discriminating-against-first-nations-kids-1.3474592>

## Dawson College workshop addresses state of aboriginal issues

**Geoffrey Kelley, Viviane Michel, others included in École d'Hiver workshop series on civic issues**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2016 6:55 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 06, 2016 8:21 AM ET





Geoffrey Kelley, the Quebec minister responsible for native affairs, said the government was looking into content in curriculum, making good on an important recommendation from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report. (CBC)

In light of last year's Truth and Reconciliation report and an upcoming inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, politicians, advocates and students gathered at Dawson College to grapple with one question: Where does progress stand for Canada's aboriginal people?

The Saturday morning discussion was held as part of École d'Hiver, a series of workshops designed to interest the public, and particularly youth, in civic issues.

"It's really important to understand these issues in order to do something. When you don't understand, you don't know where to place yourself," said psychology student Marie-Eve Gosselin.



Psychology student Marie-Eve Gosselin took Quebec minister responsible for native affairs Geoffrey Kelley to task for what she said was double-talk on aboriginal issues. (CBC)

The need for more understanding was echoed by Viviane Michel, president of Quebec's Native Women's Association and a speaker at the event.

"Before we can live together, you have to know us better," she said. "Learn our history, where we're coming from, what has become of us, and how we can work together in the future."

Michel listed the Indian Act's particular discrimination against women, the impact of colonization, and the progress made on decolonization efforts as major native issues that require more public awareness.

Geoffrey Kelley, the Quebec minister responsible for native affairs, said education is already on the provincial government's agenda.

"There is a committee already at work in the department of education to look at the content of our curriculum — it's one of the very important recommendation of Truth and Reconciliation," he said.

## **'Choices are made'**

Though speakers and participants agreed that more awareness was key, the discussion was not without disagreement and the realization that there was a long way to go.

Gosselin accused Kelley of double-talk, saying the minister supported aboriginal issues while his government cut social services.

Kelley denied those accusations.

"Choices are made. And choices always have to be made because the needs of a society are greater than the means to support everything."



Viviane Michel, president of Quebec's Native Women's Association, said understanding the impact of colonization was key to progress on aboriginal issues. "Before we can live together, you have know us better," she said. (CBC)

"We're hopeful that the economy will pick up," Kelly added. "that will allow us to refinance some things."

Michel agreed that things were looking up for aboriginal people, but said racism and understanding remain big obstacles.

For the discussion's host, the most important takeaway was display of the sincere interest in native issues she found in young attendees.

"It's refreshing to see how considerate they are and how much they already know from our different cultures," said Marie-Josée Parent, who is Mi'kmaq.

"The conversation has already started."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/dawson-workshop-indigenous-issues-1.3478030>

## Aboriginal youth celebrated

By [Kevin Hampson](#), Daily Herald-Tribune

Monday, March 7, 2016 7:45:28 MST AM



Left to right: Angie Crerar, president of Metis Local 1990 Grande Prairie, Omarla Cooke, Kierra Akinneah and Shelly Logan on Saturday March 5, 2016 at the Aboriginal Youth Role Model Awards in Grande Prairie, Alta. Akinneah was presented with the Hayley Gardner Outstanding Youth Award. Kevin Hampson/Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune/Postmedia Network

Twenty youth received accolades Saturday at the Aboriginal Youth Role Model Awards in Grande Prairie.

The awards ceremony was part of the annual Spirit Seekers Youth Conference, held at Grande Prairie Regional College on Friday and Saturday.

Kierra Akinneah, an 11-year-old student at Spirit of the North Community School in High Level and member of the Bushe River Reserve, took home the Haley Gardner Outstanding Youth Award.

Angie Crerar, president of Grande Prairie Métis Local 1990, introduced the award and remarked that the future looks bright for Aboriginal youth.

"Fifty years ago when I graduated there was only two of us in Fort Smith," she said.

"Today is a different world, a world of opportunity. Grab it. Run with it."

Crerar knew Gardner, who died in a car accident in 2013 at age 14, as a "a young lady of deep respect, vision, and great pride in her Métis heritage." The young volunteer was always willing to help anybody in need, Crerar added.

An emotional Shelly Logan, Gardner's mom, read Akinneah's bio and presented her with the award.

"The principal of the Spirit of the North Community School has stated that she has been a great student at the school and her compassion and kindness to her fellow students shows through her daily interactions," Logan said.

Akinneah said afterwards she was surprised when she found out that she won the award and sad to learn about the story behind it.

"I liked how they described Haley," she said.

## AWARDS

Junior and senior Athletic Achievement Awards went respectively to Ty Deleeuw, a Grade 10 student from High Level, and Grade 12 student Brian Bohler, who plays for the Peace Wapiti Academy Titans football team.

Angela Maki, a Grade 12 PWA student and GPRC student Janine Gauchier took junior and senior Academic Achievement Awards, respectively.

Grade 12 Comp student Lauren MacDonald received the Junior Academic Excellence Award and GPRC's Jonathan Parenteau got the senior category.

The Junior Culture and Heritage Award went to 11-year-old Colby Bateman, who started Cree at his school when his family moved to Grande Prairie from the Horse Lake First Nation in Northwestern Alberta. The senior category was awarded to Cara Manuel, a 23-year-old GPRC student.

The Health and Wellness Awards went to 16-year-old St Joe's High student Chelsea Currie and GPRC student Angela Rutherford, 25.

Junior Career and Employment went to Janine Willier, Grade 12 PWA student, and Starrly Gladue, a 25-year-old Edmonton resident who plans to return to her High Level home to work with youth.

Arts Music and Creativity Awards went to Larissa Okimaw-Keels, an 11-year-old from Grande Prairie who is studying dance, and Kristen McArthur, a 25-year-old musician and U of A graduate.

Kadence Simoneau, 12, an active volunteer in Grande Prairie, won the Youth Community Service Award. Dion Napio, a 29-year-old Sturgeon Lake counsellor, received the senior award.

The Ahkameyimok Perseverance Award went to Lieghton Alook, a Grade 11 PWA student, and posthumously to Donald Moberly. The former PWA student died last year in a stabbing in Sexmith. Moberly's sisters accepted the award on his behalf.

Robin Donald, a business and administration student at GPRC, was awarded the Melodie Wilton in Friendship, Education and Service Bursary.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.dailyheraldtribune.com/2016/03/06/aboriginal-youth-celebrated>

## **Sakewew student earns third place in entrepreneurship challenge**

**Thunderchild First Nation member participates in Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge**

[John Cairns](#), Staff Reporter / Battlefords News-Optimist  
March 7, 2016 08:27 AM



Josephine Awasis, a student at Sakewew High School in North Battleford, recently placed third in the Aboriginal Youth Business Challenge in Saskatoon. She won \$500 for her business idea Pawata Designs, an apparel and beaded accessory line. Photo by John Cairns

A student at Sakewew High School has earned third place at the Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge in Saskatoon.

Josephine Awasis, a North Battleford resident and member of Thunderchild First Nation completing an upgrade year at Sakewew, won a prize of \$500 for her idea called Pawata Designs.

Her business idea was motivated by her desire to honour her First Nation heritage. It was an “apparel and beaded accessory line” and “it’s just really inspired by Cree culture and mainly Cree syllabics. I just really want to promote a healthy lifestyle while keeping the traditions and culture alive.”

Awasis described Cree syllabics as “one of the first forms of written language that the First Nation people use.” It’s also something not many people are learning about, so she “really wanted to keep it going, pass it on to younger generations.”

Awasis got involved in the competition through her schoolwork. She is studying entrepreneurship as an elective, and “then when I started getting into the classes, I started getting into it and really wanting to know more, and it escalated from there. I started thinking of business ideas and things I could do, causes I could help.”

Her teacher, Reid Stewart, told her about the Aboriginal Youth Idea Challenge and the workshops that would entail. However, Awasis said “he never really told us about the big gala at the end where you’d have to present your business.”

That proved to be intense. There were eight workshops held during the week at the Brett Wilson Centre in Saskatoon. There the students learned about making and putting together a business plan and then submitting it.

From there, six people who had attended two or more of the workshops, were chosen to make a presentation to judges on the final day Feb. 27, at the Hilton Garden Inn.

Awasis had to give a five-minute pitch of her business idea and then answer questions for five minutes in front of five judges. She had to present her plan on how she would produce her products, get the capital to start up and describe the financials.

“The five minutes to pitch were the longest five minutes of my life,” admits Awasis.

She compared it to what participants on Dragon’s Den go through.

“It was really nerve wracking.”

Fortunately, her family had made the trip there to give her moral support.

Stewart and others at Sakewew were pretty excited when they heard of Awasis’s success. The \$500 prize goes towards the startup capital of her budding business.

“That really helped out in getting product and the other things that I need,” Awasis said.

Awasis is planning to continue her education and keep building her business.

Awasis is still in the process of designing some of the product line and getting a few T-shirts and bunnyhugs made, and is really focused on promotion at the moment.

The next step after this will be to start selling her product line to the public. She's made a number of prototypes for her family to wear and has been working on different styles of beadwork, "trying to get lots out there," she said.

Awasis had been considering going into teaching, but after this experience she is also considering more of a business direction and enrolling at North West College.

All in all, she is proud of her accomplishments with Pawata Designs.

"I'm really happy and proud of it, and my family has been awesome in supporting me," said Awasis.

"I'm really happy that I'm finding a way to promote my culture and the things that I want to keep alive in it."

You can learn more about her business at <https://www.facebook.com/pawatadesigns>.

- See more at: <http://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/northwest-region/sakewew-student-earns-third-place-in-entrepreneurship-challenge-1.2191758#sthash.PcncXBG3.dpuf>

## Spelling bee attracts 149 First Nations students

Jayne Foster, Staff Reporter / Battlefords News-Optimist

March 10, 2016 09:39 AM



The first ever First Nations Provincial Spelling Bee, to be hosted by Chief Poundmaker School this spring, has attracted a total of 146 students.



The FNPSB will be held at the Don Ross Centre in North Battleford Friday, April 8. Finalists will qualify for a national spelling bee, presented by Spelling Bee of Canada in Toronto, Ont. Sunday, May 15.

In the primary age group, six to eight years old, there are 37 registered. In the junior age group, nine to 11 years, 53 are registered. There are 56 students registered in the intermediate age group, 12 to 14 years old.

Organizer Pauline Favel, a student support worker, has become the president of the Saskatchewan Region of Spelling Bee of Canada and says she is excited Spelling Bee of Canada has endorsed the FNPSB as a regional competition. Nine winners will be recognized locally and the first place winners from the bee's three categories will advance to the national spelling bee as Saskatchewan's only representatives.

"This is a first ever for native people," says Favel.

It's an exciting initiative that promotes literacy, study skills, public speaking skills and healthy competition, she says.

The day of competition will begin with registration at 8 a.m.

Opening ceremonies at 8:30 a.m. will include a welcome from Favel, an opening prayer offered by Elder Sylvia Weenie, an Honour Song by Sakewew Drum Group, introductions and remarks by local dignitaries and sponsors.

Founder and executive director of Spelling Bee of Canada, Julie Spence, will be on hand to provide background on the organization. The not-for-profit grassroots organization, was established in the greater Toronto area in 1987 and aims to enrich the child and youth learning experience and engage schools and the community at large in an annual education process. To date over 50,000 children have participated in the program.

The competition begins at 9:30 a.m. Pronouncers will be Lester Favel and Tyler Cameron.

There will be a break for lunch and presentations to the category winners are to take place at 4 p.m.

The event is also expected to be the subject of a documentary by Lana Slezic, Toronto photographer/filmmaker.

Believe and Achieve is the theme of the FNPSB. Favel says the initiative will showcase the talents of First Nation youth, their abilities and their strengths and the work First Nation schools are doing to improve literacy among their students.

The competition is open to First Nation students who attend federal schools, although that may be expanded in future years. Each participant pays a registration fee of \$35, which

goes to Spelling Bee of Canada. That organization provides an e-manual with a list of 400 words at primary, junior and intermediate levels. A CD with the proper pronunciation of the words is also made available as is a manual for the spelling bee officials.

- See more at: <http://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/local-news/spelling-bee-attracts-149-first-nations-students-1.2194749#sthash.BNEqf88V.dpuf>

## Aboriginal Health

### **This Cabinet Minister Quit Because a Dry Community in Canada Is Getting a Liquor Store**

By [Natalie Alcoba](#)

March 4, 2016 | 2:25 pm

"My name is Paul and I'm an alcoholic."

With those words, the health and justice minister in Canada's youngest, and northernmost territory exposed the deeply personal side of what has already been an emotionally-charged issue in Nunavut: the opening of the first beer and wine store in the capital of Iqaluit in four decades.

Paul Okalik took his last drink on June 11, 1991, and on Thursday he [quit his post](#) in the cabinet of the territorial government, citing irreconcilable differences.

"I cannot support an institution of selling beer and wine in my community, while we don't have the facilities to support those who may not be able to combat their addictions," Okalik, a former premier, said.

Access to alcohol has been a longstanding point of contention in Nunavut, a vast region that represents one-fifth of Canada's landmass with just 32,000 inhabitants, most of them Inuit.

Alcoholism, crime, and a thriving bootlegging industry led to calls on the government to ease restrictions on the purchase of booze, which varies across the territory.

In Iqaluit, which shuttered its lone liquor store in the 1970s at the behest of angry citizens, people can have alcohol shipped to a heavily secured government warehouse, or they can apply for a liquor permit and order it directly. Other communities have

established committees that regulate who can buy liquor, how much, and how often, while others prohibit it entirely.

And yet, binge drinking is seen as one of the big societal issues in a territory [wracked](#) by suicide, whose indigenous people [endured](#) the effects of residential schools, and saw their [once nomadic existence](#) melt away, sometimes through [forced relocations](#).

Opening up a store in Iqaluit has been pitched as a way to change a practice of "guzzling" hard liquor to one of drinking beer and wine. The local police predict a store will help curb bootlegging, but could lead to an initial spike of calls to their detachment.

A [plebiscite](#) on the issue last year returned overwhelming support — 77.5 percent of ballots were in favor of retail beer and wine sales.

"Bootlegging is rampant, and I think that to me is one of the most negative impacts on this territory," George H. Hickes, a member of the legislative assembly, told VICE in a 2015 documentary about prohibition in the north.

"There's a lot of people here who just haven't been educated on how to drink responsibly."

In an email, he said he supports access to beverages that have a lower alcohol content, and said a pilot project would provide data to measure the impact of such a store.

"I feel that we need to follow the recommendation of the Liquor Taskforce and the will of the people that voted in the plebiscite last year, that access to beer and wine could be a way to give people safer options than buying hard liquor from bootleggers," Hickes wrote in an email to VICE News.

Still, debate has remained fierce, with many opponents packing a town hall meeting in 2014, telling stories of alcoholism that ravaged their families the last time a liquor store was open in Iqaluit, when it was known as Frobisher Bay.

At a gathering of the legislative assembly this week, officials indicated that the government is still figuring out how to open a beer and wine store in the capital. Finance Minister Keith Peterson [said the government](#) wants to put programs in place before proceeding, noting that people are very worried that "alcohol has been bad for Nunavut."

In an interview Friday with CBC, Okalik said that he isn't opposed to beer and wine stores, but doesn't think Iqaluit is ready.

"When I was going through my experience, there was no real local capacity to support me," he said, adding that programs that support addicts need to be in place first.

"The rush to open a beer and wine store would set us back, and I could not just sit there and accept something like that," he said. "I have my limits, and I'm here for my fellow citizens."

**Direct Link:** <https://news.vice.com/article/this-cabinet-minister-quit-because-a-dry-community-in-canada-is-getting-a-liquor-store>

## **Niki Ashton sends plea to federal government following rash of suicides on Pimicikamak Cree Nation**

**'We can't afford to lose young leaders in our communities in the north and across the country,' Ashton says**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2016 8:08 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 06, 2016 8:08 AM CT



Niki Ashton, member of Parliament for Churchill — Keewatinook Aski, is calling on the federal government to invest in First Nations youth following a rash of suicides on Manitoba's Pimicikamak Cree Nation. (Liam Richards/Canadian Press)

Niki Ashton, member of Parliament for Churchill — Keewatinook Aski, is calling on the federal government to invest in First Nations youth following a rash of suicides on Manitoba's Pimicikamak Cree Nation.

"We do have a new government and we've heard, certainly, pronouncements and interest in working with First Nations youth but I think it's important that we be honest: We haven't seen commitments in terms of funding or investment," she said.

Four teenagers have died by suicide in three months in the remote community. The youngest victim was a girl who will be buried on Sunday, which would have been her 15th birthday. The oldest was 18.

Ashton says the deaths are not surprising because they took place in a community that desperately lacks resources for youth.

"I know from the many visits I've had there and the time I've spent there that young people in that community, but also in other northern communities, face a real lack of supports and recreational opportunities and that those kinds of situations lead to immense hopelessness," she said.

"Unfortunately ... this has led to the worst possible tragedy, which is an epidemic of suicides."

The community needs a crisis centre, she said; a place young people can go to seek help immediately. It also needs centres where children and adolescents can go to have fun and engage with each other.

"We heard very clearly from a young leader from Cross Lake, Amber Muskego, who spoke very powerfully in saying there aren't activities for young people to do," she said.

"She called for a crisis centre and obviously a place where young people can get help right now but also in the longer term, to address the lack of recreational opportunity; the lack of youth drop-in centre; the lack of places where young people can go and come together in a healthy and positive way."

Essentially, she is calling for places that are common place in off-reserve communities across the country.

"But, unfortunately on-reserve that's not the case. I think we have to be very clear about the fact that this is connected to the lack of federal funding that First Nations face," Ashton said.

"We need investment in opportunities for young people to live healthier lives and to regain hope."

Ashton describes her role as "painful," and even "frustrating" because year after year, she said, she has observed needs going unmet. On Saturday, she called on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to bring the state of remote communities in a new direction.

"As he's taken on the role of minister in charge of youth as well, there's perhaps no more urgent issue to deal with when it comes to young people in our country than the high rates of suicides that First Nations youth face," she said, noting the issue has been "well-known" for years.

"Given the prime minister's interest in supporting young people, I certainly hope he will take it upon himself to work with First Nations, work with First Nations youth and more importantly, allocate the funding that is necessary to create healthy opportunities for young people in terms of education, in terms of recreation and ... in terms of restoring a sense of hope."

For Ashton, it's a familiar story of what could have been avoided.

"We can't afford to lose young leaders in our communities in the north and across the country when we could prevent every single one of those suicides," she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/niki-ashton-first-nations-youth-pimicikamak-cree-nation-1.3478044>

## **Doctors need to examine biases they may have against indigenous patients, report says**

Julien Gignac

The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, Mar. 06, 2016 5:38PM EST

Last updated Monday, Mar. 07, 2016 1:06PM EST

Doctors need to examine any biases they may have against indigenous patients, says a new guidance document from the College of Family Physicians of Canada that addresses systemic racism in health care.

"It's a silent topic, really," said Darlene Kitty, one of the document's authors. "People don't like to see if there's racism existing in the health-care system, but there definitely is."

It also says more education and training are key to addressing the issue.

"It should start at the very beginning of medical school, or nursing school," Dr. Kitty said. "Sometimes it boils down to lack of knowledge, lack of appreciation of the challenges that indigenous people face."

Dr. Kitty is the director of the Indigenous Program at the University of Ottawa, which teaches medical students about indigenous health and social issues to ensure they are applying cultural awareness and sensitivity to their work.

Most medical schools have such components in their curriculums already, she said, although they are not mandatory.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has recommended that all levels of government augment "cultural competency training" in medical schools and the health system itself.

“It’s important to engage in the genuine interests of the indigenous patients,” Dr. Kitty said, “and doing so by giving culturally safe care and especially at the interface where patients and health professionals meet. If the experience is bad, some patients may disengage.”

The guide asks physicians to acknowledge and change any negative perception of indigenous people so they can respect their patients’ individual needs.

Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day, who manages the national health file for the Assembly of First Nations, said the solution is twofold.

“The relationship with the health-care community and First Nations definitely needs to be reflective of the [TRC’s] calls for action,” he said, “but I will also suggest that things need to change fundamentally with respect to the health-care system itself and investment.”

A 2015 Auditor-General’s report highlighted disparities in health care provided to First Nations people in remote areas. It found about 400 nurses serve roughly 95,000 First Nations people in 85 indigenous health facilities in Ontario and Manitoba. The report found some facilities were in substandard states and that nurses were not thoroughly trained to deal with the needs of certain communities. Of 45 nurses studied, only one had completed compulsory courses in indigenous health offered by Health Canada.

First Nation leaders from Ontario, including Mr. Day, declared a public-health emergency last week, calling on the federal government to act within 90 days to address deficiencies in the system in northern indigenous communities.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/doctors-need-to-examine-biases-they-may-have-towards-indigenous-patients-report/article29043005/>

## **Health Canada bans 'non-urgent' medical travel for First Nations during hockey tournament**

**'Does that mean everybody stops getting sick in our communities during hockey tournaments?'**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 07, 2016 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 08, 2016 10:06 AM ET





Health Canada says it restricts non-urgent medical travel during the Northern Bands hockey tournament in Dryden, Ont. because flights and hotels are often filled up with hockey players and their families. (Northern Bands Hockey Tournament)

A First Nations leader in northwestern Ontario is questioning a Health Canada decision that will restrict "non-urgent" medical appointments for thousands of people next week.

CBC News obtained a letter from Health Canada to First Nations north of Sioux Lookout that outlines restrictions on travel for patients from March 14 to 18, during the Northern Bands Hockey Tournament in Dryden, Ont.

Dryden is about 350 kilometres northwest of Thunder Bay.

The letter explains that flights from the remote First Nations are often full and hotels near hospitals in Dryden and Sioux Lookout are booked up with hockey players during the annual tournament.

"Therefore, to prevent leaving clients stranded before or after appointments, we cannot schedule travel or accommodations for non-urgent appointments," the letter says.

Health Canada authorizes and funds medical travel for First Nations people living in remote communities through its Non-Insured Health Benefits Department.



'They're looking for ways how to deny our people access to care,' says Sol Mamakwa, health director for Shibogama First Nations. (Sol Mamakwa/Twitter)

The health director for the Shibogama First Nations Council, which represents five remote communities in northwestern Ontario, said the ban on non-urgent travel reminds him the kind of control exercised under [the old pass system](#), where people needed permission from the Indian agent to leave the reserve.

"They're looking for ways how to deny our people access to care." Sol Mamakwa said. "Does that mean everybody stops getting sick in our communities during hockey tournaments?"

Nursing stations are the only option for care in the fly-in First Nations community in northwestern Ontario, and one-way plane trips to the nearest hospital or specialist can cost up to \$1,000. Health Canada pays for the flights if they are deemed medically necessary.

## **Emergency travel 'would never be affected'**

A spokesperson for Health Canada said notification about the limits on travel was sent to First Nations in October so medical appointments would not have to be rescheduled to avoid the hockey tournament.

"Medical emergencies would never be affected by a notification of this kind," Maryse Durette said. "Patients needing emergency travel will always have their needs met."

Mamakwa said the situation with the hockey tournament is just one example of how that system is broken.

"If the Toronto Maple Leafs made the playoffs, does St. Michael's [Hospital] cancel their surgeries and appointments?" he said. "No, it only happens in northwestern Ontario."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-health-care-hockey-1.3476907>

## **Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami puts suicide prevention at top of to-do list**

**'It's something that we need to deal with and we need to understand more fully,' says Natan Obed**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 09, 2016 9:44 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 09, 2016 9:44 AM CT



'It's something that we need to deal with and we need to understand more fully,' says Natan Obed, president of ITK. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC )

The president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami says suicide is a crisis across Inuit regions.

The national Inuit organization released its strategy and action plan yesterday, outlining seven goals for the next three years, with suicide prevention at the top of the list.

Natan Obed says suicide prevention is a personal priority.

"It's something that we need to deal with and we need to understand more fully and need take action on," he says. "It's my hope that at the national level, we can frame this issue of suicide and suicide prevention in a complete and holistic way that everyone can agree on."

Obed says his goal is to create and release a national Inuit suicide prevention plan this summer.

He says the four land claim organizations will work together with ITK on the plan.

Other priorities include housing, reconciliation, education, and the environment.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/itk-action-plan-suicide-1.3483180>

## **More details emerge about suicide crisis at Pimicikamak Cree Nation**

**Pimicikamak declares state of emergency to deal with suicide crisis, 100 now on at-risk list**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 10, 2016 10:26 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 10, 2016 10:26 AM CT



An estimated 1,000 people from the Pimicikamak Cree Nation (Cross Lake First Nation) attended a suicide prevention walk Thursday. (Facebook)

More details are emerging about the circumstances surrounding the six suicides that sparked a state of emergency in a northern Manitoba.

[Pimicikamak Cree Nation \(Cross Lake\) declared a state of emergency this week](#) after the deaths of six people by suicide since Dec. 12.

Two of the cases involved teens who were in the care of child and family services, while one case involved a mother whose children had CFS involvement – that's according to a briefing note from the community's band office.

In the first case, on Dec. 12, a homeless woman in her early 20s took her life at a temporary place of residence.

The second, just over a month later, involved a female teenager who was in CFS care. The band believes a possible suicide pact was at play in this incident. At that point, 36 youth in the community were identified as high risk of committing suicide.

The third came on Feb. 5, when a male teenager took his life in a foster home. He was on the high risk list and had just returned to Cross Lake after being discharged from the Health Sciences Centre's child and adolescent psychiatry unit.

By Feb. 29, the at-risk list grew to 100 young people. That day, a female teenager took her own life at her grandparents' home. She was not on the at-risk list at the time.

The last two incidents involved a mother of three children who had an active file with CFS and a Cross Lake band member who was living off-reserve at the time.

On Wednesday, acting chief Shirley Robinson called on Health Canada to send a crisis team to the community and said there were 170 students on a suicide watch list at the community's high school.

A number of Manitoba's ministers, including family services minister Kerri Irvin-Ross, addressed the crisis in Winnipeg, saying a mobile crisis unit had been sent to the community from Thompson, Man.

On Thursday, the number of young people on the at-risk list was revised to 100 after the band cross-referenced lists from multiple local youth agencies.

According to Aboriginal Affairs, about 5,800 people live on the reserve.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/more-details-emerge-about-suicide-crisis-at-pimicikamak-cree-nation-1.3485074>

## **A nature-based program provides a powerful First Nations metaphor for lessons on consent**

ANGELA STERRITT

Special to The Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Mar. 10, 2016 10:41AM EST

Last updated Thursday, Mar. 10, 2016 10:53AM EST

*This is one of four stories exploring culturally relevant First Nations sex education. Read the other stories:*

[-Indigenous languages recognize gender states not even named in English](#)

[-How this indigenous youth is making sex education sexy](#)

[-How the traditional indigenous practice of beading can lead to frank talk about sex](#)

Megan Kanerahtenhawi Whyte is encircled by a group of about 10 other young Mohawk parents and their children in a garden in Kahnawake, a community just outside of Montreal. All their hands are sunk in soil, planting seeds, pulling weeds and sculpting a woman out of earth.

A young parent herself, Whyte is leading a cutting-edge youth parenting program called Skátne Ionkwatehiahróntie, or “Our Families Grow Together.” She partnered with Native Youth Sexual Health Network a year ago to undertake parenting and reproductive teachings in a land-based framework.

Touching the soil-laden female body and harvesting plants leads to a discussion about consent – the importance of asking permission before touching or taking. The planting of the seeds lends itself to talk about fertility, sex and pregnancy.

Taking care of the plot, the watering and weeding is representative of the responsibility to care for families and the land that feeds them.

“It’s just a really powerful metaphoric space for parents and their children to interact with our cultural stories and our teachings but also to interact with the land and each other to build our own concepts of relationships,” Whyte says.

As part of the program, the young parents and their children visit and tend to the garden on a regular basis. “It’s just a really expansive kind of conversation that can happen from planting a seed in the dirt.”

At each step of her program, Whyte cultivates traditional Mohawk teachings on life cycles, relationships, identity and even sexual anatomy.

She tells me, humbly, that her three-year-old daughter “can name every single part of a uterus.”

And most kids in her parenting program can probably boast the same anatomical prowess. In one of the activities, parents and children, armed with cloth and thread, sew stuffed uterus, identifying the tubes, layers and lining as they go. “My little one can tell you what happens in the uterus, where it’s located, and how important it is. And that knowledge leads to using language like ‘my body is mine.’”

For Whyte, it’s about instilling teachings about permission and boundaries early on so participants grow up knowing values that embody safety and respect. “Later on in life if they are exposed to really challenging situations where consent is involved, they feel better prepared and it’s not unknown territory.”

Her program is only in its infancy, and already its success has exceeded community expectations. And that’s no easy feat. According to Whyte, filling gaps in services for young indigenous parents is difficult. One of her jobs as a co-ordinator of Skátne Ionkwatohiahrontie is to act as a liaison to help young parents access basic needs like health care. She says often youth with children face stigma and shame in receiving services because of judgment and discrimination.

In line with the Network’s values, Whyte is reclaiming needed space for young Mohawk parents, but she’s also reclaiming traditional ceremonies and teachings.

“Your body is framed as this gross negative thing and that stigma carries on for generations, so it’s like trying to break that and reclaim and re-integrate our female ceremonies,” she says.

Recently, Whyte’s parenting group was part of a ceremony in a moon lodge that celebrated a women’s moon time – or, in Western terms, her period. The lodge is made of a frame of willow branches and covered in cloth and blankets.

Participants sing songs and speak words to honour the moon and celebrate being a woman. Traditional and modern teachings are shared through ancestral stories that carry lessons about roles and relationships. Outside of the lodge, a sacred fire is lit and kept ablaze by a youth.

“We managed to have the fire lit and blazing through rain and wind. It was almost as if Mother Nature was testing us to see how committed we were and almost instantly, the weather improved.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/a-nature-based-program-provides-a-powerful-first-nations-metaphor-for-lessons-on-consent/article29130788/>

## **How the traditional indigenous practice of beading can lead to frank talk about sex**

ANGELA STERRITT

Special to The Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Mar. 10, 2016 10:40AM EST

Last updated Thursday, Mar. 10, 2016 10:51AM EST

*This is one of four stories exploring culturally relevant First Nations sex education. Read the other stories:*

[-A nature-based program provides a powerful First Nations metaphor for lessons on consent](#)

[-Indigenous languages recognize gender states not even named in English](#)

[-How this indigenous youth is making sex education sexy](#)

Erin Konsmo, the media arts justice and projects co-ordinator at the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, is stitching a condom with red, orange and black beads. You might say she is crafty at taking the edge off risqué discourse.

Konsmo, 28, is one of eight front-line staff who works at the NYSHN, an organization dedicated to sexual and reproductive health rights and justice for indigenous youth.

In her beading workshop, Konsmo, a Métis from Alberta, is blending a traditional indigenous practice with a modern symbol of sex to open up sensitive but needed discussions. The beaded rubber sheaths are an expression of indigenous pop art – just like beaded medallions, key chains or mirror hangings – as well as conversation pieces.

It's one of the many ways the Network is breaking new ground and effectively breaking the ice, stereotypes and shame surrounding sex in indigenous communities. The impact of colonialization, with its attempted eradication of native cultures, has translated into troubling statistics for present-day native communities. Residential schools, the outlawing of life-cycle ceremonies, policies that enforced assimilation to pan-European culture – all contributed to a loss of knowledge and a legacy of trauma, Konsmo says. Indigenous people have higher rates of teen pregnancy, HIV infection, child sexual abuse and sexually transmitted disease and infection than the general population.

At any given time, the NYSHN has about 15 projects on the go, with hundreds of youth participating in indigenous communities and urban centres across Canada and the United States.

In her beadwork workshop, attended by youth of all genders and ages, Konsmo guides the conversation through such disparate but connected topics as safer sex and the history of native peoples in Canada.

“Beadwork is the artistic medium in which many of these difficult conversations change – from trauma and shame, to laughter, self-determination of our bodies and knowledge,”



says Konsmo from an Edmonton youth centre called iHuman. Though indigenous people represent about 5 per cent of the overall population of Canada, 9 per cent of all people living with HIV in Canada are indigenous.

In some Saskatchewan First Nations communities, the rate of new HIV infections is 11 times higher than the national average.

“A lot of what we do is about survival and supporting young people where they are at,” Konsmo says. “We know young people are going to face harms, we just want to be there to support them without shame.”

In addition to safer sex dialogue, the NYSHN leaders also guide discussions on difficult topics surrounding safe injection, reproductive rights and two-spirit experiences. The Network has two National Indigenous Youth Councils on HIV and Sexual Health and started the first indigenous youth HIV council in the world. The group also supports actions such as getting clean needles into prison.

“The model we have is really indigenous,” Konsmo says. “So we don’t deal with sexual health in a corner and then land rights in another corner, for example.” The Network parallels many indigenous cultures’ holistic way of thinking and being. Political, social, physical and even spiritual matters are viewed and treated as interconnected, not discrete from one another.

The tragedy of missing and murdered aboriginal women, the fight for environmental justice and the push for safer sex are all treated as one outcome of the other. “We understand how sexual violence is connected to increased presence of industry in indigenous territories, for example,” Konsmo says.

Viewing all matters as interdependent embraces inherent indigenous worldviews. In Gitksan culture, for example, matrilineal rights and responsibilities are connected to the relationship to and care for the land, which is connected to the spirit that permeates everything. Kinship is not just about relationships to each other, but to the land and water and the future that awaits in the spirit world. Those relationships determine political conduct in indigenous governing structures. For the NYSHN, seeing the interrelatedness of issues also helps to pinpoint root causes and chart new courses forward.

Konsmo admits there is still stigma around sex and sexuality in some indigenous communities, left over from the religious teachings and the abuse in residential schools. In some communities there are queries and apprehensions, for instance, about beading condoms. Some community members have raised concerns about blending a sacred traditional practice with a crude symbol of sex. But Konsmo says the conversations that arise from activities such as beading condoms are imperative for youth who may otherwise be wary or even fearful of talking about safer sex. Konsmo says critiques of what the NYSHN does are rare because the Network only goes to communities where it is invited. And they are summoned guests in many communities.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/how-the-traditional-indigenous-practice-of-beading-can-lead-to-frank-talk-about-sex/article29130767/>

## Aboriginal History

### **Parks Canada juggles competing claims to Franklin shipwrecks**

**Discovery of HMS Erebus wreck in Arctic waters produced dazzling objects — and ownership claims**

By Dean Beeby, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 08, 2016 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 08, 2016 2:42 PM ET



Parks Canada has been in a tug of war with the government of Nunavut about who controls artifacts from the sunken Sir John Franklin ships in Arctic waters — and so far Nunavut is winning.

Nunavut officials refused to issue archeological dive permits to Parks Canada unless the federal government agreed to give up the authority to retrieve whatever artifacts it wants from the ocean floor.

Parks Canada initially balked at the restriction, but relented after getting advice that defying the Nunavut government could get their divers arrested by the RCMP.

Now, the agency must seek prior permission from Nunavut's director of heritage before retrieving anything from HMS Terror, the remaining lost ship from Franklin's ill-fated 19th century Arctic expedition to find the Northwest Passage.



A cannon from HMS Erebus, one of the ship's two six-pounder guns, is hoisted toward the surface during the 2015 artifact recovery mission in the Arctic. The government of Nunavut is requiring Parks Canada to seek prior authorization before divers can recover any artifacts from the still-lost companion ship, HMS Terror. (Thierry Boyer/Parks Canada)

The awkward outcome is yet another headache for Parks Canada, which is delicately navigating competing claims to the Franklin wrecks and artifacts.

Other claimants include the Kitikmeot Inuit, who have a say in the fate of the artifacts under a land claims treaty, and the British, who have the right to cherry-pick any artifacts that are of "outstanding significance" to the Royal Navy.

A CBC News investigation uncovered the jurisdictional tensions behind the dazzling headlines of the discovery of the wreck of HMS Erebus in September 2014 and the continued search for HMS Terror.

The spat with Nunavut began last spring, when Parks Canada applied for a permit to send divers to both the wreck of HMS Erebus and, if found, the wreck of HMS Terror.

"During the permit application process for the spring 2015 ice dive on HMS Erebus, the government of Nunavut included a condition that denied Parks Canada the authorization to recover artifacts from the wreck site," says a briefing note for Leona Aglukkaq, who was then the environment minister.

"Parks Canada responded to the government of Nunavut that it could not accept the condition," says the briefing, which noted the "risk of being charged" under the Nunavut Act. "The Royal Canadian Mounted Police have the authority to lay a charge." The note, and related documents, were obtained by CBC News under the Access to Information Act.

## Trumps permit regulations

The federal cabinet subsequently declared the HMS Erebus wreck and surrounding waters a national historic site, which decisively trumped Nunavut's permit regulations.

But the other lost Franklin ship, HMS Terror, posed a problem because the wreck is almost certainly outside the boundaries of the national historic site and is therefore under Nunavut's jurisdiction.

Nunavut's insistence that Parks Canada get prior permission before retrieving any object from the wreck of HMS Terror put the agency in a difficult position.

"The ability to recover artifacts is a critical requirement of the search operation," says the briefing note.

'Ice conditions are ... raising the risk of permanent loss of artifacts'- *Environment minister's briefing note*

There's a "likelihood that evidence for HMS Terror will be spread over a debris field.... ice conditions are unpredictable, and there are no guarantees that additional searches will be possible in the coming years, raising the risk of permanent loss of artifacts."

In the end, Parks Canada acceded to Nunavut's demands, and agreed last June to seek prior permission of Nunavut's director of heritage before its divers remove any HMS Terror artifacts they may come across. Parks Canada is again applying for an HMS Terror dive permit this year, and Nunavut spokesman Doug Stenton says the same conditions will apply.



A boot was among the artifacts found during last summer's search of the wreck of HMS Erebus. (Parks Canada)

Just how that awkward arrangement will work is unclear. "The approval process would be managed on a case by case basis once Parks Canada archeologists identify potential artifacts for recovery," agency spokeswoman Kassandra Daze says in an email.

Complicating the artifact dispute is the Nunavut Land Claim Agreement, which requires the federal government to negotiate what's called an Inuit Impact Benefits Agreement for any area that it declares a national historic site, in this case the location of the wreck of HMS Erebus.

Talks on the benefits agreement have begun. A Kitikmeot Inuit spokesman says ownership and control of Franklin artifacts is a priority because the Inuit want the objects to be displayed in local communities to enhance tourism. So far, all 55 objects retrieved from HMS Erebus remain in Ottawa for conservation, including the ship's bell.

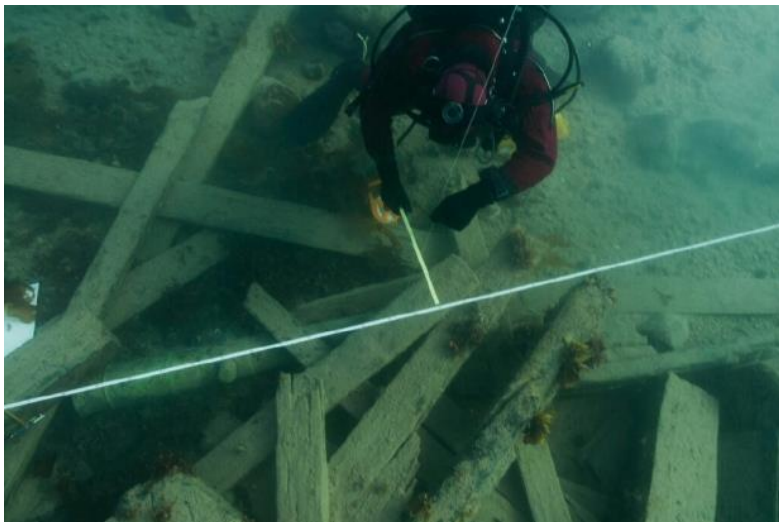
## **Britain has claim**

"We'll all be coming to a table with our legal opinions at some point and trying to finally establish the ownership," says Fred Pedersen, director of planning and communications for the Kitikmeot Inuit Association in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut.

The British government also has a stake, based on a 1997 memorandum of understanding signed with Canada before any elusive Franklin wreck objects were found. The agreement acknowledges Britain's ownership of the wrecks and their contents, but says that country will assign ownership to Canada of everything recovered from the wrecks.

But there are two key exceptions. Any gold found will not be given up by Britain (none has been discovered yet). And "any recovered artifacts identified by Britain as being of outstanding significance to the Royal Navy will be offered to Britain for display in an appropriate museum."

A spokesman for the British High Commission in Ottawa, Nathan Skolski, says that "at present no items have been returned to the U.K. nor has the U.K. sought to do so." He adds that there currently is "no protocol for determining ownership."



A Parks Canada underwater archeologist positions reference lines in the debris field near the wreck of HMS Erebus. The search for Franklin's other ship, HMS Terror, will continue this year. (Parks Canada)

Daze confirms Britain has not assigned ownership of anything to Canada, 18 months after HMS Erebus was discovered.

She adds that Parks Canada's goal is to make the artifacts available for public display somewhere in Nunavut after a lengthy conservation process.

Since 2008, Parks Canada has spent about \$1 million on its archeological dives for the Franklin wrecks.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/parks-canada-franklin-wrecks-artifacts-1.3479595>

## Aboriginal Identity & Representation

### Fort Smith man wants Michif made an official language of N.W.T.

**Estimates Métis language has about 300 speakers in the territory**

By Trail's End, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 04, 2016 9:24 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 04, 2016 3:25 PM CT



Signs in Cree and Chipewyan have been hung at Kaeser's grocery store in Fort Smith. As part of aboriginal languages month, Vance Sanderson with the NWT Cree Language Program is working on making the languages more visible in the community through signage. (submitted by Vance Sanderson)

A Fort Smith man wants to make Michif, a Métis language, one of the official languages of the Northwest Territories.



Vance Sanderson is the manager of the N.W.T. Cree Language program and also advocates on behalf of Michif speakers. He said it's hard to estimate how many Michif speakers there are in the territory.



'It's a language that's very special to Métis people,' says Vance Sanderson. (submitted by Vance Sanderson)

"It's a mixture. Within the N.W.T. there are a lot of different groups that are influenced by the languages they speak, so you could have French/Slavey Michif, you can have Chipewyan/French Michif, you can have Cree Michif, so depending on which community and how they use French within their aboriginal language, it can differ," he said.

"So I'd have to say the number is around 300."

NWT has 11 official languages: English, French, Inuktitut, Inuinnaqtun, Inuvialuktun, Gwich'in, North Slavey, South Slavey, Tlicho, Chipewyan and Cree.

According to the N.W.T.'s 2009 Community Survey, five of the N.W.T.'s nine official aboriginal languages had less than 500 fluent speakers in the territory.

Sanderson said a campaign to get Michif added could include a count of speakers or a poll to see if the idea of adding the language has popular support.

## **Making language more visible**

As part of aboriginal languages month, the N.W.T. Cree Language Program is working on making Cree and Chipewyan more visible in the community through signage in stores, and Sanderson said Michif could also be used.



"There are a lot of Métis people who are fighting for Michif recognition within legislation within our territory," he said.

"It's a language that's very special to Métis people and to share it and have it recognized would be even more special for everyone."

Michif was the language spoken in the home of N.W.T. Premier Bob McLeod and his brother, Liberal MP Michael McLeod, according to *Aboriginal Business Quarterly*.

Northwest Territory Métis Nation president Garry Bailey said he supports Sanderson's initiative to have Michif recognised as an official language of the N.W.T.

"Of course we all support it," he said. "We support all of our aboriginal languages, bringing our languages back. We just got to get GNWT on board."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/michif-metis-nwt-official-language-1.3475320>

## **Buctouche First Nations member complains to Canadian Human Rights Commission**

**Ashley Sanipass said the reason she was denied vote is because she works off reserve**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 04, 2016 10:25 AM AT Last Updated: Mar 04, 2016 10:25 AM AT



Ashley Sanipass said she asked to have her name added to the voting list, but she said it wasn't. (CBC)

Members of the Buctouche First Nations are complaining to the Canadian Human Rights Commission claiming they were refused a vote in the band's most recent elections.

Ashley Sanipass and her father say her rights were [violated](#) when she was refused a vote in the Feb. 29 election.

"Well, I just went in, the electoral officer kind of went 'Oh God' and she was just like 'you can't vote. I'm going to need you to leave'."

The incident didn't surprise Sanipass. Before the vote, she asked to have her name added to the voting list, but she said it wasn't.

Sanipass said the reason she was denied is because she works off reserve and working on reserve isn't an option.

"No, there's no jobs available," she said.

The Buctouche band office wasn't open Thursday and no one could be reached for comment.

Chief Ann Mary Steele — who just won another term — said in a statement to the CBC on Feb. 22 that she and band members will review the custom code that dictates band elections. She also said amendments are a possibility.

## **Concerned about rights**

Garry Sanipass is glad his daughter is standing up for her rights. He ran in the election, coming in second, but said he isn't concerned about the results. He is concerned about rights.

"This is a communal band, so they are not allowing her to vote which is against her democratic rights," he said.

Sanipass says taking the fight to Ottawa makes the most sense for his family.

"We don't have a lot of money so that was the best recourse that we had after talking to several other people who said that human rights would probably be the best people to go see because they could help solve the problem and we wouldn't have to pay for a lawyer," he said.

The complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Commission is in the early stages, but Ashley said she isn't giving up.

"I'm in the process of making a complaint, it's a long process, so I'm getting it started now," she said.

Sanipass hopes her efforts will allow her to vote in the next band elections five years from now.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/vote-first-nations-human-rights-1.3475774>

# First Nations equality always comes down to 'monumental David vs. Goliath epic struggle'

## Why is it necessary to 'fight tooth and nail' for equality, asks Steve Bonspiel

By Steve Bonspiel, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 05, 2016 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 05, 2016 6:00 AM ET



Children and youth gathered at Parliament Hill for the annual youth-led Have a Heart Day in 2012. (First Nations Child and Family Caring Society)

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal released its decision in Ottawa January 26, 2016, strongly agreeing with Cindy Blackstock and condemning the Canadian government for continually underfunding aboriginal children on reserve, but there is still a whole lot of work to do.

Now Blackstock, along with other indigenous groups, is pressuring the government to provide some immediate relief. Most notably, the question is where the money Ottawa continues to deny aboriginal children will come from -- and where it should now go.

Blackstock, the executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, has not stopped fighting for equality for a decade — in spite of Ottawa's illegal bullying tactics, trying to shut her down at every turn.

Along with the Assembly of First Nations, Blackstock exposed a corrupt mechanism whose explicit goal appeared to be to save a few bucks at the expense of Aboriginal children in foster care.

Thousands more dollars per child are budgeted by Indigenous Affairs on all other children off-reserve.

Meanwhile many First Nations communities operate without proper facilities, including drinking water, sewage and infrastructure. For aboriginal children on reserve that means lower quality of life, and less of a chance at a successful one.

## Continued battles for equality

It's interesting to compare this case to the one Sharon McIvor fought for almost three decades.

McIvor, another powerful defender of indigenous rights, has battled for the equality of indigenous women who married non-indigenous men since 1985's Bill C-31 was introduced, a piece of Canadian legislation that essentially gave women like her federal Native status.

In fact, as soon as the bill passed she applied for status and her fight for the rights of others began.

What Bill C-31 did not do, in McIvor's opinion, is go far enough.

It failed to give status to the grandchildren of those unions, and McIvor, a lawyer from BC and a member of the Lower Nicola Indian Band, fought all the way to the Court of Appeal of British Columbia, resulting in Bill C-3, also known as the Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act, in 2009.

Canada fought both of these women tooth and nail, and all they wanted was to be treated equally.

There is something seriously wrong with a government fighting the first peoples of this land so they can short change them, while wasting money that could be going to help all children.

They hoped these brave, selfless women would give up. Ha! Fat chance.

When you look at these two issues, you see how compartmentalized and heavily unbalanced the struggle for equal rights for Aboriginal Peoples is today.

Want to make sure your child is treated fairly? Fight.

Want to ensure you're recognized for who you are? Fight.

Want to be treated equally? You know the answer to that, if you're indigenous.

It always comes down to a fight, a battle, a monumental David versus Goliath epic struggle.

Any government who denies children equality, who controls who is recognized as indigenous in this country — all because of cash — is one that has to be challenged at every turn, even if we only show up to the fight with a slingshot.

## **Bigger fights to come**

There are bigger fights coming up in the future to keep your eyes on.

Health. Education. Land claims.

That last issue has moved so slowly for most nations they have collectively lost hope of getting land back, and have — or will have to settle — for mere dollars and cents.

Unless, you guessed it, they fight.

Prove we owned the land? Why does the government not have to show real proof it legally obtained our land; free of coercion, trickery and outright theft?

Far too often that proof doesn't exist, yet it is left to First Nations with no money to challenge the status quo, the erroneous assumption that land currently held by Canada is held under legal title.

The first two examples, health and education, will have to be brought to human rights, or into the court system, all the way up to the Supreme Court; in order to make real change and bring our standards up to par with the rest of the country.

Think about the irony of that.

The only mechanism for our people to voice our opinions effectively is to use a foreign system with all of the balls in the government's court.

Well, maybe not all of the balls.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/first-nations-equality-monumental-david-versus-goliath-1.3476108>

## **First Nations chief files complaint after ceremonial pipe snafu at airport**

**'This was a desecration of my person which cannot go unchecked,'  
AMC Grand Chief Derek Nepinak says**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 04, 2016 5:46 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 04, 2016 5:46 PM CT



Grand Chief Derek Nepinak of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has filed a human rights complaint after an uncomfortable experience going through security at the Ottawa International Airport in February. (The Canadian Press)

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Derek Nepinak announced Friday he has filed a human rights complaint against the national airport authority after he says airport security mishandled sacred objects in his carry-on luggage Feb. 8.



Grand Chief Derek Nepinak says security staff at the Ottawa airport lacked cultural awareness around sacred pipes used in indigenous ceremonies. (The Canadian Press)

In early February, The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) said they would investigate claims from Nepinak that security removed a sacred bundle of ceremonial tobacco and a pipe from his bags during the carry-on screen process.

Nepinak and the AMC released a statement Friday saying it had filed a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.



"I have carried my pipe bundle with me around the world to bring ceremony and hope to Indigenous communities in other continents. The pipe is used in ceremonies that have been practiced by our people for countless generations," the statement reads.

"I have never been treated as disrespectfully as I was treated in Ottawa on Feb. 8. Even though I was very clear in informing security staff that I was travelling with my sacred pipe bundle and describing the contents, which they could clearly see it as it passed through their X-ray machines, they insisted on unpacking my bundle without regard to the spiritual protocols of our people and without my consent. This was a desecration of my person which cannot go unchecked."

Nepinak said he recognizes the need for enhanced security measures at airports, but added ceremonial indigenous objects "should be treated with dignity and respect."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-grand-chief-derek-nepinak-files-human-rights-complaint-against-airport-authority-1.3477127>

## Reporting in Indigenous communities: 5 tips to get it right

By Angela Sterritt Posted: Mar 10, 2016 10:01 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 10, 2016 10:01 AM ET



Gitxsan journalist Angela Sterritt interviews Ashley Callingbull in her Enoch community for a TV segment on CBC's 8th Fire.

Reporting in Indigenous communities can be tough. It's not just navigating sensitive issues like those surrounding MMIW stories, but covering complex terrain in stories that



include the Indian Act, treaties and land claims to name a few. It's not always easy to get it right.

As a journalist at CBC, I've covered hundreds stories in Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories, downstream from the oilsands and in my own Gitanmaax community, in Northwest B.C. But even as an Indigenous reporter, there are times when I grapple with how to tell a sensitive story in an Indigenous community.



Angela Sterritt reporting on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a day before the report is released.

So over the last few years I began to research and share tactics about how to get it right. I worked with Journalists for Human Rights, an organization that has uncovered how Canadian Indigenous stories are left out or negatively slanted in media in a study ([Buried Voices: Media Coverage of Aboriginal Issues in Ontario](#)) recently recognized by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

With JHR, I facilitating a course for journalists in newsrooms across Canada, called Reporting in Indigenous Communities, modeled on Duncan McCue's popular web site and UBC class, [RIIC](#). Here are some tips we gathered to foolproof your Indigenous journalism.

### **1. Be cautious of stereotyping**

In a recent media workshop, I screened what I considered an excellent news story about voting in an Indigenous community. It was an emotional, engaging and empowering story focusing on two young main characters. I paused at certain scenes to explain what the reporter and the interviewee were doing to make compelling TV.

But a student stopped me to ask why the reporter questioned the youth about the type of drugs he used growing up - "oxytocin or meth"? "What did that have to do with the story," the student probed. It stopped me in my tracks. I knew it gave the story weight and context about the hurdles this community had overcome, but I also thought, how

often would we ask non-Indigenous people this same question for a story unrelated to drugs and alcohol? Surely many people of different races have had brushes with and even struggled with addictions.

It's a lesson about inserting our own bias about Indigenous people, intentionally or inadvertently into our storytelling. The tip here is to think about what biases or tropes you are bringing to your stories with your own preconceptions about Indigenous people.

**Here are some common tropes to avoid:**

**a) The victim narrative:** depicting Indigenous people or a person as collapsing under the burden of history or current realities, or overcoming tragedies that have no root cause.

**b) The addict and alcoholic stereotype:** exhibiting a person's past or current substance abuse when it is unrelated to the story.

**c) The warrior trope:** rather than looking at concerns as legitimate political, environmental or socio-economic ones – painting an Indigenous person as a trouble maker, or as irrational, even violent.

**d) The greedy chief label:** instead of telling a robust story about finances, treaties and lands in Indigenous communities, showcasing a narrow or crude presentation of the issues. Recently one chief's high wages were used to paint all chiefs in a similar light, for example.

Being sensitive to stereotyping is not the same as avoiding pertinent issues that actually exist. As journalists, we have a duty to accurately and objectively report on issues. But there are ways we can do this while still being sensitive to the challenges of Indigenous reporting. Which leads us to the next tip.

## **2. Try to place Indigenous history and context into your story**



Chantelle Bellrichard, a Metis journalist, on her way to Lelu Island with the Skidegate Saints basketball team.

If you're new to this beat, this may seem like a daunting task, but there are simple ways to include depth, context and intricate history into your story. If your editor won't budge on word count, suggest placing in value-added content in the form of sidebars, shadow boxes, graphics or charts. Sometimes adding in just one line of text can help to provide important background. For TV stories, this context can be placed in your supers or in animated graphics.

Context example: A paragraph explaining why there are increased rates of violent crimes in Indigenous communities or historical reasons that have lead to substance abuse to ensure that you're not reporting on an issue in a silo. If you're looking at the effect, you also need to look at the cause.

Also, one Indigenous person's voice is not representative of all.

### **3. Consult a variety of sources**

I've done this, heck we've all done this — rely on that one Indigenous chief, professor or community activist to represent a whole spectrum of views and thoughts of all Indigenous people.

But if you're looking for the Indigenous perspective in your story, it will be difficult to find it since Indigenous peoples in Canada are not homogenous. Even within smaller communities, diverse viewpoints exist. This doesn't mean it's easy to capture all voices, but being aware that many perspectives, worldviews and thoughts exist is the first step to not pigeon-holing the Indigenous people in your story.

### **4. Get beyond the crisis — find balance between good and bad stories**

The majority of news is about reporting on issues and exposing what's not working — important and necessary of course. But media tends to have shortfalls in journalism about people, organizations and events that are making change.

A way to balance the stories we tell is through solution-focused journalism. It's not the same as advocacy journalism or reporting on a neighbourhood that banded together to save a cat stuck in a tree — it's about looking at real, substantive issues and highlighting those who are pursuing change.

### **Some good examples of solution-based journalism:**

- A Lakota woman, Leah Gazan [responds to reports of misconduct](#) by Winnipeg taxi cabs by joining the taxi board
- A woman of the Skatin and Sts'ailes First Nations [fights for justice](#) through a national inquiry into MMIW

- A group of Indigenous people in Winnipeg [respond to discrimination against Indigenous boys](#) by creating education around why boys wear braids

This is exceptionally relevant when reporting on Indigenous issues. While the public needs to know that conditions on reserves can be dramatically worse than in urban areas, or that social discrepancies exist between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, it is also important to investigate how people are attempting to change these situations.

Solution-based journalism can allow media coverage of Aboriginal people and communities to broaden its scope beyond crisis and find balance in the newsroom between "bad" and "good" news stories.

## 5. Create positive relationships



Anishinaabe journalist Waubgeshig Rice in Ottawa where he reports as a VJ for the CBC.

Reporting in the north and in remote communities I learned quickly that there are strong views about the media. Remember, as journalists working for mainstream media, we represent and work for a powerful social structure. For Indigenous people with an historical and continued negative relationship with institutions, this presents a challenge for us as journalists.

If you're reporting on sensitive issues, 'gotcha journalism' will do you more harm than good. Be very clear about who you are, why you're there and the exact type of information you're looking for. Here are some quick go to tips for building relationships with Indigenous people and communities:

- Call often, even when there isn't a story
- Follow up after stories are done: this will be seen as respectful by communities that value reciprocity
- Check Indigenous news websites for under-reported story ideas
- Create tabs in your social media manager that capture activity from local First Nations and affiliated groups
- Include Indigenous People in your non-Indigenous stories
- Find a balance in the newsroom between "bad" and "good" news stories
- Allow for extra time, especially for elders
- Request permission to photograph or film a ceremony
- Clearly state expectations
- Consult a variety of sources

Most of all, keep learning. Don't beat yourself up for making mistakes (we are all still learning). The language we choose to use, the concepts and the history we decide to leave out, all have impacts on Indigenous people and communities. It is up to us as journalists; it is our responsibility to get it right.

**The most frequent question I get asked in workshops by journalists is ... "What do we ... um ... call you in our stories?"**

Good question.

**First and foremost always try to use a person's or people's specific nation, First Nation or community.** For example, "She is an Inuk from Cambridge Bay", or "He is Gitxsan from Kispiox", or "They are Annishnabe from the Sagkeeng First Nation."

**Indigenous** – The word many prefer as it connotes a connection to the land or traditional territory. It is also the official word used by the United Nations.

**Aboriginal** – The term enshrined in the Canadian constitution to identify the original inhabitants of Canada. It was also the preferred term used by the federal government, up until the last election.

**First Nation** – There are over 630 distinct First Nations in Canada. The term came into effect in the '70s to replace the word Indian which is considered a derogatory word. It refers to both status and non-status people. It is also interchangeable with the word "band" or "community" in some instances.

**Inuit** – Indigenous people originating from Northern Canada in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador. The word means "people" in Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk.

**Metis** – A post-contact Indigenous people with roots in the historic Red River community.

**Status Indian or non-status Indian** – An individual's legal status as an Indian, as defined by the Indian Act. A person could be full Indigenous to Canada, but because of historical circumstances are non-status Indian ([Indian status: 5 things you need to know](http://www.cbc.ca/radio/docproject/blog/reporting-in-indigenous-communities-5-tips-to-get-it-right-1.3480853)).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/docproject/blog/reporting-in-indigenous-communities-5-tips-to-get-it-right-1.3480853>

## Indigenous game designer challenges stereotypes

Sunday March 06, 2016





Being a woman in the gaming industry is a challenge. When you're an indigenous woman, there's an extra level of stereotype and accepted violence that has to be challenged.

When it comes to challenging sexist stereotypes, Elizabeth LaPensée is on the front lines in the gaming industry. She worked with Daniel Starkey, a Chickashsha Nation game journalist, to get the 2008 remake of the game *Custer's Revenge* — that was still available for download — removed from the web in 2014.



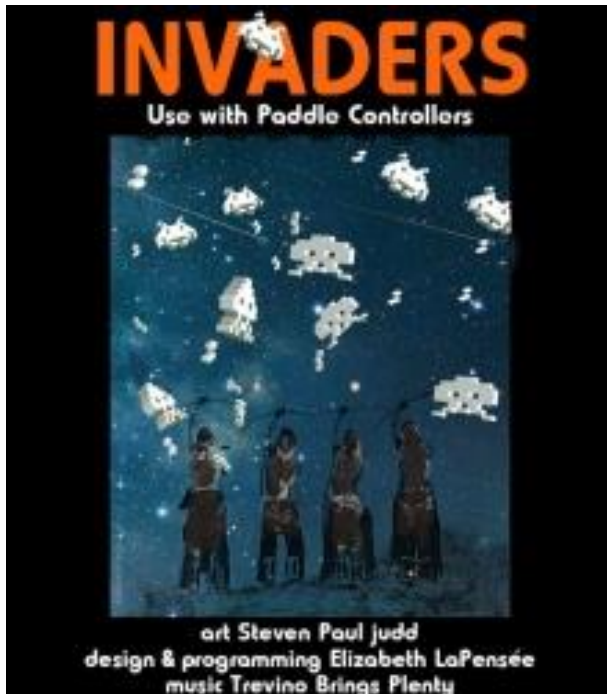
A screenshot of *Custer's Revenge* (Twitter.com)

"The whole goal of the game is for you to go from one side of the screen to the other to rape an 'Indian princess' ... who's pre-tied up at the other side of the screen," explained LaPensée. "And you win ... just by basically gaining points by raping her."

The Anishinaabe/Métis game designer grew up playing video games. But it wasn't until *Diablo* was released in 1996 that she saw herself somewhat reflected in a video game.

"There was a woman character with a bow. And from that point on I thought, 'Yes! Okay, this is something I can grasp onto,'" she said.





Invaders video game by Elizabeth LaPensée with art by Steven Paul Judd (Submitted)

Male characters she grew up with included Native American space marine *Turok*, and Nightwolf from the *Mortal Kombat* games.

"There's a part of you that is just so excited a native character is being represented at all," said LaPensée. "But at the same time, there is always this mix of stereotypes."

She said she wishes it could be done better with a more accurate, intelligent reflection of what indigenous people are really like. But LaPensée isn't waiting around for a gaming company to come knocking at her door to offer her a job.

LaPensée decided to get her PhD so she can apply for funding to create games and release them for free.

She added that at some point during mainstream game design, marketing departments get to weigh in on whether the product is going to sell.

She cites the game *DarkWatch*, where the original lead character was an indigenous woman named Tala.



The Tala character from Darkwatch. (Supplied)

"But it was the marketing team who said, 'This isn't going to sell,'" LaPensée said.

Instead, they made Tala a side character — replacing her with a white male player character. The marketing team also decided to promote the game by making Tala the first video game character to appear fully nude in Playboy magazine.

Despite the stereotypes and overt sexualization of female characters, LaPensée said there are now games starting to appear that dispel those negative views.

A game called *Never Alone*, which was developed by E-Line Media with the Cook Inlet Tribal Council, features a strong indigenous female character. It is available for the Wii system and won best debut at the British Academy Games Awards in 2015.

LaPensée has also created positive game play with games like *Invaders*, *Ninagamomin jinaanaandawi'iwe (We Sing for Healing)*, and *Max's Adventures*.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/unreserved-honours-the-strength-of-indigenous-women-1.3472826/indigenous-game-designer-challenges-stereotypes-1.3476519>

## Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

# **Nunavut's female Inuit public servants earn less than everyone else**

## **Inuit women make up nearly 40 per cent of GN workforce; earn the least**

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, March 07, 2016 - 6:59 am



A Government of Nunavut office building in a small community. The GN's 2014-15 annual public service report shows that about one in every four full-time jobs lie vacant. The largest single group is Inuit women, who make up 38 per cent of the work force. But they're mostly employed in the low-paid administrative and para-professional jobs. (FILE PHOTO)

If you're a woman and a land claim beneficiary and you work for the Government of Nunavut, you probably earn less money than everyone you work with.

But you also make up the largest proportion of the GN's entire workforce: 38 per cent of Nunavut's 4,541 public servants are female land claim beneficiaries.

Nunavut's 2014-15 Public Service Annual Report, recently tabled in the Nunavut Legislature, said the GN is still operating under capacity at 75 per cent.

That means one in four of all jobs within the GN remain vacant.

And of the jobs that are filled, half of those employees are beneficiaries.

Those figures have [remained](#) virtually [unchanged](#) for the past 15 years.

But this current report, more comprehensive than in years past, contains a lot more information about the GN's workforce.

For instance, when it comes to salaries, men who are non-beneficiaries earn the most, with an average salary of \$102,569. Women who are non-beneficiaries are a close second earning, on average, \$99,042 per year, the report said.

Men who are beneficiaries lag behind with average salaries of \$82,376 per year and women who are beneficiaries come in dead last, earning \$79,480 per year.

“Since 2007, for both beneficiary and non-beneficiary male employees, salaries have been consistently higher than their female counterparts,” the report said. “Salary growth has been slowest for female beneficiary employees.”

The report explains that female employees hold fewer professional and management positions than their male counterparts, which might explain why they earn less.

It’s also interesting to note that there are nearly twice as many women working for the GN as men: 2,186 women compared to 1,214 men.

And, while female beneficiaries make up the largest part of the public service, their male counterparts don’t fare as well: only 12 per cent of GN jobs are filled by Inuit men.

Across the board, GN employees earn an average salary of \$90,474 — that’s up from \$70,669 in 2007.

When gender is factored in, the average salary for a women GN employees is \$87,424 and the average for men is \$95,978.

When you compare beneficiaries with non-beneficiaries in government jobs, the same trends as in previous years persist: beneficiaries tend to occupy the lower power, lower paying jobs.

Of the total administration jobs within the GN — the lowest rung on the ladder — 88 per cent are filled by beneficiaries. For the next level up, para-professional, beneficiaries occupy 71 per cent of those jobs.

In middle and senior management, beneficiaries hold only one quarter and one fifth of those jobs, respectively.

Beneficiaries fare a little better in the top level executive jobs. Of the GN’s 40 executive positions — the senior public servants in government — 15 of those jobs, or 44 per cent, are held by beneficiaries.

The GN has struggled for years to comply with the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and have its workforce reflect Nunavut’s demographic breakdown, which stands at 81 per cent Inuit and 19 per cent non-Inuit, according to 2014 statistics.

One way to tackle that is through the Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program, offered since 2001 as a one- to three-year internship program run through the GN's Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs at a cost of \$2 million per year.

That dollar figure includes salaries for 16 interns, \$25,000 each, on top of that, for training, education and travel as well as overall program operations and maintenance costs.

According to the annual report, 23 beneficiaries have completed the program, 20 are still employed with the GN, and 16 are in management positions.

Another 17 did not complete the program but, of these, seven are still with the GN and two are in management positions.

The problem is, the program is undersubscribed, the report said: "There are vacant intern positions that need to be filled, especially for specialized and senior management positions in the GN."

Why the vacancies? It's tough to take on interns when there's no one there to mentor them.

"Individual departments have indicated being short staffed, and having no time to train staff as reasons for not participating in the program," the report said.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674female\\_inuit\\_public\\_servants\\_earn\\_less\\_than\\_everyone\\_else/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674female_inuit_public_servants_earn_less_than_everyone_else/)

## **First Nations gets \$9 million in skills training funding from B.C. government**

THE CANADIAN PRESS March 8, 2016



Members of the Tsimshian First Nation on British Columbia's northwest coast will be getting \$9 million in provincial funding to job skills.

VICTORIA -- Members of the Tsimshian First Nation on British Columbia's northwest coast will be getting \$9 million in provincial funding to job skills.

Premier Christy Clark announced the agreement, which must still be drafted.

The Tsimshian will get the money over three years through a deal with the Tsimshian Roundtable, which includes six First Nations, the B.C. and federal governments, and proponents of the liquefied natural gas industry.

Chief Clifford White of the Gitxaala Nation says the agreement focuses the socio-economic well-being of members through access to employment.

He says part of the roundtable's goal is to provide kindergarten to Grade 12 education.

Malaysian-owned oil and gas giant Petronas plans to develop a liquefied natural gas plant near Prince Rupert, and White says First Nations need long-term benefits from any such project on their territory.

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/metro/first+nations+gets+million+skills+training+funding+from/11771045/story.html#ixzz42RQxuoFu>

## Aboriginal Politics

### Trudeau meets with First Nations chiefs in Calgary



[Michael Franklin](#), Web Producer

Published Friday, March 4, 2016 6:36AM MST

Last Updated Friday, March 4, 2016 6:38PM MST

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited Calgary on Friday afternoon and met with First Nations leaders at the Grey Eagle Casino to discuss issues that affect indigenous people.

The group discussed a number of issues facing First Nations people, including an inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women, investing in education and implementing recommendations brought forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Last year, Trudeau said he would be working to renew the relationship between Ottawa and the First Nations, which had been put under some stress while Harper was in office.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau poses with elders after receiving a ceremonial headdress while visiting the Tsuu T'ina First Nation, near Calgary, Alta., on Friday, March 4, 2016. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jeff McIntosh)

About 100 First Nations chiefs were in attendance at the meeting.

Trudeau was also presented with a ceremonial headdress as part of the conference.

The headdress, or war bonnet, symbolizes accomplishment, respect, bravery and peace building.

“It is a distinct privilege to become an honorary Tsuu T’ina and member of the chieftainship. You can be confident that I will wear both the title and the Tsuu T’ina feather hat with the utmost pride and respect,” said Trudeau.

In 2011, the Blood Tribe in southern Alberta named then-prime minister Stephen Harper the band's honorary chief and gave him a headdress of eagle feathers.

*(With files from the Canadian Press)*

**Direct Link:** <http://calgary.ctvnews.ca/trudeau-meets-with-first-nations-chiefs-in-calgary-1.2803596>

## **Alberta first nations disappointed in meetings with Justin Trudeau**

**Chiefs disappointed not to have seat at the table**





Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, right, presents Squamish elder Latash Nahanee with a gift during a meeting of the First Ministers, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Leaders in Vancouver.

**By: Samantha Power For Metro Published on Thu Mar 03 2016**

Alberta First Nations say they did not see the promised nation-to-nation relationship at the Prime Minister's meetings on climate in Vancouver.

"First Nation people were just asked to come and visit the premiers and Prime Minister," said Treaty 6 Grand Chief Tony Alexis.

Alexis said First Nations were disappointed to learn they would not have a seat at the table during the Prime Ministers meeting with the premiers. Prime Minister Trudeau had a separate meeting with Indigenous leaders and aboriginal organizations and then a meeting with the premiers and their representatives.

Alexis did secure a spot to the First Ministers meeting as part of Minister of Indigenous Relations Richard Feehan's delegation. And although Alexis thanks Feehan, he's disappointed that elected chiefs did not have a more direct role.

"That meeting was a lot of chiefs who went out with the spirit of their people to find out that we were not going to be allowed to speak," said Alexis.

The climate meetings this week were a follow up on the Paris COP21 meetings which promised full participation in the creation of a climate change strategy by Indigenous peoples.

In addition to a lack of participation, Athabasca Chipewyan Chief Allan Adam walked out of the meeting with Trudeau due to its emphasis on economic solutions to the climate problem. According to the statement announcing the meetings discussion would focus on "the opportunity for Canada to become a leader in the global clean growth economy."

"What Chief Adam is saying is blunt and I share that with him," said Alexis.

The Assembly of First Nations is advocating full participation in the design and delivery of Canada's climate change strategy.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/edmonton/2016/03/03/alberta-first-nations-disappointed-in-justin-trudeau.html>

## Trudeau honoured by Alberta's Tsuut'ina First Nation, chiefs issue challenge

By Staff The Canadian Press and Global News

March 4, 2016 3:00 am

Updated: March 4, 2016 6:15 pm



CALGARY – Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been honoured by a southern Alberta First Nation, but aboriginal leaders also challenged him to deliver on his promises to Indigenous People.

Trudeau, who has [called an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women](#), and Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde were honoured at an elaborate ceremony at the Tsuut'ina Nation. The prime minister was presented with a black cowboy hat, a fringed black jacket and an honorary headdress.



During his speech, Trudeau warmly and graciously received the honour, calling it a distinct privilege. He said it was something he will wear and a title he will bear with the utmost respect and pride.

Tsuu T'ina Chief Roy Whitney told Trudeau that his election brings with it high expectations that the government will work with First Nations to overcome historical obstacles to recognition. Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, outlined five promises the Liberals made during last fall's election and told Trudeau he expects him to keep them.

Trudeau reiterated that he is committed to renewing a relationship with First Nations, Inuit and Metis.



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau arrived to a throng of media at Grey Eagle Hotel and Casino to meet dignitaries near Calgary, March 4, 2016.

The headdress, or war bonnet, that was presented to Trudeau symbolizes accomplishment, respect, bravery and peace building. Tsuut'ina chief and council spokesperson Kevin Littlelight said the bonnet is made of felt and golden eagle feathers—the “most sacred of all feathers to First Nations.” He said the beadwork is exclusive to the Tsuut'ina Nation, and the bonnet was made by elder and medicine man Bruce Starlight.



Littlelight said the headdress is traditionally given to someone who displays courage and bravery, but in recent times has also been bestowed to those who bring peace.

“It was an idea coming out to the Tsuut'ina Nation to bestow a feather hat on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau because he was a real leader in terms of taking a concern on aboriginal issues,” Littlelight said in an [interview last week](#).

“To our surprise, the prime minister agreed...it's an honour that works both ways. He's coming here to accept, we're honouring him, and for us—out of the 600 nations—to have this privilege is astronomical.”

Reporters were cautioned not to step on the red carpet that had been laid out prior to the prime minister appearing at the event.



Prime Minister Trudeau and Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde enter in a ceremonial procession. Hundreds applaud loudly for the prime minister.

He was greeted by Tsuu T'ina Chief Roy Whitney, Bellegarde and First Nation elders before going into a private meeting.

The First Nation rarely bestows ceremonial headdresses upon sitting prime ministers, though other Canadian leaders have received similar honours from other bands.

In 2011, the Blood Tribe in southern Alberta named then-prime minister Stephen Harper the band's honorary chief and gave him a headdress of eagle feathers.

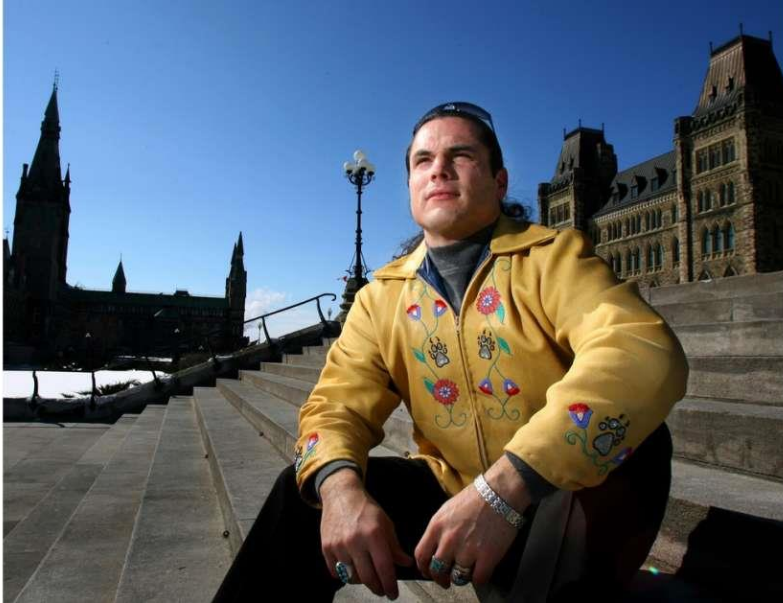
*With files from Global's Doug Vaessen and Jill Croteau*

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2557323/trudeau-to-receive-ceremonial-headdress-discuss-first-nations-issues-in-calgary/>

# Doug Cuthand: Congress of Aboriginal People now a fringe organization

[Doug Cuthand, Saskatoon StarPhoenix](#)

Published on: March 5, 2016 | Last Updated: March 5, 2016 4:53 AM CST



Patrick Brazeau was chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. Jean Levac, CanWest News Service / The Ottawa Citizen

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met this week with the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami prior to the first ministers' meeting on climate change in Vancouver.

The Native Women's Association of Canada and the Congress of Aboriginal People were conspicuous by their absence. CAP and NWAC were not invited to the meeting.

The government has a policy of a nation-to-nation relationship with the First Peoples and, while NWAC represents an important group, women are already represented within the other three organizations. CAP is a more complicated matter, and its exclusion is a mix of partisan and Indian politics.

CAP, formerly known as the Native Council of Canada, began in 1971 as an umbrella organization to include both Métis and status Indian people. It never really got off the ground because the National Indian Brotherhood was already formed and represented the status and treaty Indians, with only the Métis organizations working within the Native Council of Canada.

The Métis organizations in 1983 formed the Métis Nation of Canada, which spoke directly to their concerns. This left the Native Council of Canada as a shell, so the name



was changed to the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, which claimed all the non-status Indians and Indians not resident on their reserves as its constituency.

This suited the federal government, since its policy is that when Indian people move off the reserve they are no longer its responsibility. The government maintains that treaty rights end at the reserve boundary, which is ludicrous. But the policy was embraced by CAP and gave it legitimacy with the government.

Two events served to undermine CAP. First, Bill C-31 was passed, allowing women and their descendants who married non-Indians to apply for membership in their original First Nation. This reversed the anachronistic section of the Indian Act, which said a woman who married a non-Indian lost her Indian status. This legislative change effectively reduced the so called non-status Indian component in CAP.

Second was the court ruling on the John Corbiere case. Corbiere, a member of the Batchewana First Nation, was living off the reserve and not allowed to vote in band elections under section 77(1) of the Indian Act, which stated that a person must be resident on the reserve to have voting rights. Corbiere launched a legal challenge arguing that the section violated the charter. The Supreme Court agreed that the Indian Act provision violated the charter.

Now off-reserve residents have the right to vote in band elections, and those of us who live off our reserves see ourselves as band members. We fall under the jurisdiction of our chief and council. By extension it also holds that we maintain our treaty rights off-reserve. This makes the need for the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples redundant for most of its former constituency.

On the partisan side of the coin, CAP has a history of supporting the Conservative Party and sniping at the other indigenous organizations. It was no fluke that Stephen Harper appointed the former head of CAP, Patrick Brazeau to the Senate. It gave him an aboriginal ally with a perch to say and do things no white person could get away with. As we know, Brazeau crashed and burned, ending with his expulsion from the red chamber.

There is an unwritten law in Indian country that indigenous organization should stay away from partisan politics. A political organization represents all indigenous people under its mandate regardless of their political stripe. Individuals may get involved in partisan politics, but they do so as individuals.

The government has made a commitment to work with the three indigenous nations — the Métis, First Nations and Inuit. Now CAP is an organization looking for members. Justice Minister Jodi Wilson-Raybould is a former AFN regional chief for British Columbia, and you can be sure that she had a chat with Prime Minister Trudeau and told him of the antics and unpopularity of CAP in Indian Country and on Parliament Hill.

**Direct Link:** <http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/0304-edit-cuthand>

# NDP leads Sask Party in female, aboriginal, other visible minority candidates

[Andrea Hill, Saskatoon StarPhoenix](#)

Published on: March 7, 2016 | Last Updated: March 8, 2016 10:12 AM CST



NDP leader Cam Broten stands with some of his diverse group of candidates at a press conference in front of Saskatoon's City Hospital. Greg Pender / Saskatoon StarPhoenix

Just a third of provincial election candidates running under the banner of the ruling and Opposition parties are women.

Both the Saskatchewan Party and Saskatchewan NDP have all 61 of their candidates in place. The Saskatchewan Party has 13 women on its roster — 21 per cent of its candidates — while the NDP has more than twice as many at 27 — making up 44 per cent of its candidates.

Joe Garcea, a political-science professor at the University of Saskatchewan, applauded the NDP for having women make up close to half its candidates. The party has an easier time recruiting women than the Saskatchewan Party simply because it has more openings for candidates, he said.

The Saskatchewan Party has multiple male incumbents running again, and it's tough for anyone — man or woman — to challenge an incumbent for nomination.



The NDP — which touts itself as having “the most diverse candidate team in the province’s history” — also leads the Saskatchewan Party in aboriginal and other visible minority candidates, with eight aboriginal and six other visible minority candidates, representing 13 and 10 per cent of candidates respectively. The Saskatchewan Party has six aboriginal candidates (10 per cent of its candidates) and one other visible minority candidate (two per cent).

According to the 2011 census, 16 per cent of Saskatchewan’s population is aboriginal while six per cent is other visible minorities.

No non-aboriginal visible minority MLA has ever been elected to the Saskatchewan Legislature, but Garcea said he is optimistic this will eventually happen. As more visible minorities run for and are elected to public office federally and in other provinces, more will be inspired to run, he predicted.

“The visible minority phenomenon, in terms of a large critical mass in Saskatchewan, is relatively new and it’ll be the children of those who immigrated in the past 20 years who will start emerging in leadership positions,” Garcea said.

“We’re going to start seeing them running and we’re going to start seeing them winning and occupying positions as representatives and cabinet ministers and perhaps even premiers in this province.”

No non-aboriginal visible minority candidate has been elected to the Legislature yet partly because no individual riding has a large enough population from a certain ethnic group to lend the support needed to win, Garcea said.

The Saskatchewan Liberals have just 53 candidates in place — 10 women, eight aboriginal people and nine others from visible minorities.

Premier Brad Wall could ask the lieutenant-governor to dissolve government and start the election period anytime between now and March 8. Voters head to the polls April 4.

Dentist Fatima Coovadia placed second in the recent Saskatoon Public Schools trustee byelection. Being a woman and a visible minority did not present any obstacles to her campaign, she said. Those qualities also weren’t her campaign’s focus, she added.

“I think a candidate’s worth should be looked at in terms of their qualifications and skill set they can bring to the position, rather than trying to place their value on either side of the gender or ethnic divide.”

Coovadia said while she would like to see a legislature that’s more representative of the population, “as long as they’re doing their job and fairly representing everyone within the electoral district, that’s all that matters at the end of the day. ”

**Direct Link:** <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/ndp-leads-sask-party-in-female-aboriginal-other-visible-minority-candidates>

## Consult band members to ensure responsible government

By Karl Hele

Monday, March 7, 2016 1:36:13 EST PM



GARDEN RIVER FIRST NATION - In answering recent demands for the elimination of the Indian Act, chiefs, whether local, regional, or national, need to be wary. Their existence depends on the current Indian Act. Any band, under the auspices of the various pieces of legislation since 1869, elects its chief and council according to a specific and evolving set of rules. Without those rules band chiefs and councils will cease to exist. Since it is elected chiefs who choose the head chief for the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), AFN's structures will also become meaningless. There are bands operating outside of the Indian Act rules that would continue to function, but they are few and far between. Regardless, band governments are similar to municipalities. The existence of both rests upon legislation created by a higher order of government not inherent to sovereignty. As such all elected band chiefs and councils are creations of the Canadian state.

In 1869, the federal government passed the Gradual Enfranchisement Act, which was the first Canadian legislation to address the election of chiefs. The Act established that the

“Governor may order that the chiefs of any tribe, band or body of Indians shall be elected by the male members of each Indian settlement ... for a period of three years” and allowed him to depose any elected chief for “dishonesty, intemperance, or immorality.” Elected officials were to number no more than “one chief and two second chiefs for every two hundred people” with all bands of 30 members or less being granted one chief. The 1869 Act also provided that “all life chiefs now living shall continue as such until death or resignation or until their removal by the governor.” It also limited chief and council powers to defined areas – public health; trespass by cattle; observance of order and decorum of assemblies; repression of intemperance and profligacy; maintaining roads; bridges; ditches; and fences; construction of public buildings; and the establishment of pounds and pound keepers – of law. Within these rules the Government of Canada established its authority over band governments.

The 1876 Indian Act and all future Indian Acts would contain sections that reaffirmed government authority over First Nations governments. No substantial modifications to the election of chiefs or the tenure of life chiefs as initially devised in 1869 occurred until 1884. The 1884 amendments to the Indian Act allowed for the governor to set aside an election if any “gross irregularity” had occurred pending an investigation. If someone was found to have undertaken electoral fraud they could be banned from running for election for six years.

In addition to the 1884 Indian Act amendment, the government passed The Indian Advancement Act in 1884 aiming to train “the more advanced Bands ... for the exercise of municipal powers.” In section 3 of the 1884 Act the government gave itself the power to declare any band “fit to have this act applied to them” via an order-in-council. Now the government of Canada could establish ‘banana republics’ on reserves as it saw fit. This became the corner stone of Indian policy and legislation.

Canada did impose elected governments when the option suited its quest to civilize or undermine community leadership. One such occasion took place in 1924 when it dissolved the traditional government at Six Nations reserve. Prior to the dissolution dissension in the political life of the community had been ongoing since at least the 1890s as increasing acculturated Indians sought elected forms of governance. While they were the minority at Six Nations, the demands for "democratic" governance and Canada's willingness to listen led to a 1924 coup d'état. On Oct. 7, 1924 Indian Agent Colonel C. E. Morgan read the order-in-council that dissolved the confederacy and ordered the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to seize all governance documents including the community's wampum which were transported to Brantford, Ont. The council chambers remained locked until after the first elections in mid-October. There are other stories surrounding Canada's imposition of band elections on communities, however most were peaceful and took place after the death or resignation of a "life" chief.

The next modifications to Indian Act elections occurred in 1951. Women were allowed to vote in reserve elections (women in Canada had earned the federal vote in 1918) and secret ballots were implemented. The 1951 changes to elections and roles of chief and council remain central to the Indian Act today. The only significant difference is bands

can now opt for custom elections; custom in the sense that chief and council are elected albeit under rules established by the band and agreed to by Indian Affairs. For instance, bands undertaking a custom election can impose age requirements on public office or require a candidate to make a cash deposit before being allowed to run for office. Additionally, under a custom election Indian Affairs “is never involved in the election processes ... nor will it interpret, decide on the validity of the process, or resolve election appeals” unlike the elections running according to Indian Act rules. Nonetheless, these custom elections are negotiated with the federal government and must be elected democratically.

Ironically, Indian Act-elected band governments often argue or advocate First Nations sovereignty. Haudenosaunee traditionalists often wonder how a creature created by Canada and designed to undermine sovereignty can truly argue for sovereignty. This is not to say that elected chiefs and councils cannot advocate sovereignty or increased authority and powers, but it is an irony that needs to be recognized. Moreover, band members need to remember that some elected officials who benefit from the current system may not want to see it altered.

To put it simply, the outright repeal of the Indian Act would leave bands without governance structures. Hopefully, Canadian officials would not allow this to happen. However there is a danger in not being prepared to deal with the eventual need for new governance structures. For instance, former prime minister Jean Chretien, in 2002, attempted to implement the First Nations Governance Act without effectively consulting First Nations. While it failed, the proposed Act continued to impose the notion of Western-style elections on communities. We cannot allow bureaucrats or politicians in Ottawa acting in concert with AFN to create national legislation aimed at First Nations as a totality that fails to account for cultural, political, and historical differences. There is a great danger in not speaking for ourselves.

Every band needs to consult its membership to ensure that a government that is responsible and representative is created. Canadians need to be prepared to see a plethora of governments on reserves that reflect the will of their communities. During this process First Nations must keep in mind that any new form of government needs to be accepted by Band members, the Canadian state, and the world. Simply, we need to ensure that vibrant governance systems are built on the fundamentals of our unique cultures that respect and speak to many ideas, while preventing perversion of our institutions by individuals seeking to act as "dictators." It will be a difficult process balancing tradition, custom, and modern ideas, but it must be undertaken to ensure that every First Nations government is accepted, responsive, and responsible to its population as well as be able to exercise its inherent sovereignty.

Karl S. Hele is an associate professor at Concordia University. He grew up north of Sault Ste. Marie and attended White Pines and Algoma University. His doctorate, from McGill in 2003, examined the Anishinaabe/missionary interaction in the Sault. His current work continues to explore the dynamics of the region's history. He is also a member of Garden River First Nation. [karl.hele@bell.net](mailto:karl.hele@bell.net).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.saultstar.com/2016/03/07/consult-band-members-to-ensure-responsible-government>

## Daughter of native rights activist wants apology from Assembly of First Nations



This undated file photo provided by her family shows American Indian Movement activist Annie Mae Pictou Aquash. The daughter of the murdered native rights activist is demanding an apology from the head of the Assembly of First Nations, saying comments Perry Bellegarde made this week were insensitive to murdered and missing aboriginal women.

**By:** Michael MacDonald The Canadian Press Published on Wed Mar 09 2016

HALIFAX — To many aboriginals, Leonard Peltier is a hero of the American native rights movement in the 1970s and a wrongfully convicted political prisoner whose story has inspired films, books, songs and T-shirt slogans.

But in the Mi'kmaq community of Indian Brook, N.S., the former member of the American Indian Movement is a largely reviled figure, considered unworthy of his cult-like status.

Those competing visions clashed Wednesday when the daughter of a murdered native rights activist from Indian Brook demanded an apology from the head of the Assembly of First Nations for suggesting Peltier should be freed from a U.S. prison.

Denise Maloney Pictou, daughter of Annie Mae Pictou Aquash, said Perry Bellegarde's comments earlier this week were insensitive to the plight of murdered and missing aboriginal women because of Peltier's ties to the men convicted of killing Aquash in 1975.

"To have an entity like the AFN endorse him marks a sad day," Pictou said in an interview. "It sends a mixed message ... It's certainly a slap in the face."

In a series of previous court cases in the United States, the FBI has implied that Aquash was executed by members of the American Indian Movement because the group's leaders believed she was an informant.

Bellegarde said Wednesday he planned to apologize to Pictou for the pain his comments caused.

"I regret that my statement on TV caused some hurt and pain for her and I want to make sure she knows that," Bellegarde said in an interview.

"I don't have as much information as the family has, so I'll be mindful and respectful, and if they've got requests for support, I can also look at that as well."

However, he said the AFN's position on the matter has been clear since 1999 when the organization adopted a resolution urging the Canadian government to ask the U.S. attorney general to free Peltier.

"The Peltier family has been living with an injustice as well," he said. "We have chiefs' resolutions that call for his release, in addition to (a similar call) from Amnesty International and ... the Dalai Lama."

The national chief, in an interview broadcast Monday on CBC, said Prime Minister Justin Trudeau should ask U.S. President Barack Obama to pardon Peltier when Trudeau visits the White House on Thursday.

Bellegarde said Peltier was the victim of a miscarriage of justice when he was sentenced to life in prison for fatally shooting two FBI agents in South Dakota in 1975.

Cheryl Maloney, president of the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, said native leaders in the province, including the regional representative for the AFN, "had no clue" about Bellegarde's position.

"I think the national chief has to retract what he said," Maloney said in an interview. "He's been very insensitive to the (Aquash) family."

Maloney said the timing of Bellegarde's comments couldn't be worse, coming on the eve of International Women's Day and in advance of the federal government's promised inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women.

"Leonard Peltier has been romanticized as a hero," Maloney said. "The (Aquash) family has taken great offence to that."

In 1973, Aquash was among American Indian Movement militants who occupied the village of Wounded Knee on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation in a 71-day standoff with federal authorities.

The simmering conflict came to a head in 1975 when the two FBI agents were shot on the reserve.

In 1977, a jury in Fargo, N.D., convicted Peltier of first-degree murder. The resident of the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota was sentenced to life in prison, but he has always maintained his innocence.

Aquash's body was found in a remote area in southwest South Dakota in February 1976, but U.S. authorities didn't file an indictment until March 2003.

Arlo Looking Cloud was convicted of Aquash's murder in February 2004 and was sentenced to life in prison.

In April 2004, Aquash's remains were exhumed from the reservation and later buried near her childhood home in Indian Brook, a small native community about 70 kilometres west of Halifax. Mi'kmaq and native leaders came from across Canada to mark the occasion on National Aboriginal Day.

In December 2007, a member of the Southern Tutchone tribe in the Yukon, John Graham, was extradited to the United States from Vancouver to stand trial for Aquash's murder.

Graham was sentenced to life in prison in January 2011 for felony murder. Prosecutors said Graham and two other AIM activists, Looking Cloud and Theda Clarke, killed Aquash because they suspected she was an informant.

Clarke, who was never charged, died in October 2011.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2016/03/09/daughter-of-native-rights-activist-wants-apology-from-assembly-of-first-nations.html>

## **Saskatchewan Metis \$725,000 in debt as election looms**

[Betty Ann Adam, Saskatoon StarPhoenix](#)

Published on: March 10, 2016 | Last Updated: March 10, 2016 4:00 AM CST

The Metis Nation — Saskatchewan (MN-S) is more than \$725,000 in debt, 15 months after losing its federal funding.

The estimate, calculated by accounting firm Ernst and Young, includes more than \$245,000 in unpaid legal fees and more than \$286,000 on an overdraft account.



The estimate does not include up to \$200,000 in federal funding holdbacks from last year, which could yet be paid out, said MNS president Robert Doucette.

Federal dollars to the organization that represents about 50,000 Metis citizens in Saskatchewan were halted in November 2014, after feuding factions of the MNS failed for five years to hold twice-yearly legislative assemblies required by its constitution.

July 30 and 31 have now been set for the long-awaited assembly, which will give MNS five weeks to prepare for a Sept. 3 election date which the Provincial Metis Council (PMC) will recommend to the assembly, Doucette said Monday.

The majority of the PMC have voted to hold the assembly in Yorkton, against the wishes of Doucette and his three supporters on the council.

He said he still hopes to persuade the council to have the gathering in Saskatoon or Prince Albert, which are more centrally located and so more likely to attract Metis citizens to observe and participate in the annual general meeting which follows.

“I think it’s important that more Metis people are involved in this than less,” Doucette said.

“There has to be inclusion and participation of our people at the MNLAs and the AGM. They should be afforded the opportunity to participate and listen to their government in action.”

Vice president Gerald Morin said the meetings should be moved around to show the MNS represents people from all over the province.

He isn’t concerned about the extra three and a half hours from Saskatoon to Yorkton that will be added onto northerners’ travel, he said.

“The cost issue is not a big factor.”

Travel costs to the assembly are covered for about 140 local presidents, the provincial council and representatives of women and youth, but non-elected Metis must pay their own way if they want to watch elected leaders or participate in amendments to the constitution, Doucette said.

The federal department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has provided \$200,000 for Ernst and Young as expert advisers to back up and protect the Metis citizenship registry, and to pay for three meetings of the council.

“Departmental officials are working closely with leadership of the Métis Nation — Saskatchewan to support the organization as it works to resolve its internal governance issues, as well as to foster conditions for a strong nation-to-nation relationship between Canada and the Métis Nation,” INAC spokesperson Michelle Perron said in an email.

Doucette also concerned that the council's appointment in February of Mavis Taylor as CEO and clerk of the assembly puts her in a conflict of interest because she is the president of the Glaslyn local and is on the board of the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Doucette, who won strong majorities in two elections, has said he will not run again. Morin said he doesn't know if he will run again.

**Direct Link:** <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/saskatchewan/saskatchewan-metis-725000-in-debt-as-election-looms>

## **Gary Lipinski to retire as leader of Métis Nation of Ontario**

**Gary Lipinski has been at the forefront of the fight for recognition of Métis people in Canada**

CBC News Posted: Mar 09, 2016 12:56 PM ET| Last Updated: Mar 09, 2016 12:56 PM ET

The president of the Métis Nation of Ontario is retiring from politics.

Gary Lipinski, who hails from Fort Frances, has been involved with the organization since it was founded more than two decades ago.

Lipinski said he got into politics to fight for the recognition of Métis harvesting rights.

One of the most memorable moments of his career was signing a historic agreement with the province in 2008, that would shape the relationship between Métis people and Ontario.

"For me it took us out of an era of denial, of non-recognition of Métis and Métis rights, and laid the foundation for a new relationship with Ontario going forward," he said.

Lipinski — who has been the head of the Métis Nation of Ontario for eight years — said he now wants to spend more time with his family, and on the land.

"If you're a northerner ... the north is in your blood. And I want to be able to get out in the land a bit more and enjoy the beautiful north we have with family and friends," he said.

"So it's a great time to pass the torch."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/gary-lipinski-retires-1.3483439>

# Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

## Quebec First Nations travel to B.C. to learn about Great Bear Rainforest deal



A small waterfall is seen just outside of Kitimat, B.C. Tuesday, Sept, 17, 2013. (Jonathan Hayward/THE CANADIAN PRESS)

The Canadian Press

Published Tuesday, March 8, 2016 2:09PM EST

VANCOUVER - Members of a remote Cree First Nation in Quebec have travelled to British Columbia to discuss the successful negotiations to protect the Great Bear Rainforest.

The Cree First Nation of Waswanipi wants to protect forests around its lands, about 600 kilometres northwest of Quebec City.

The six-person Quebec delegation, including Chief Marcel Happyjack, hopes to learn from all sides involved in the decades-long negotiation to protect 85 per cent of the unique temperate rainforest on B.C.'s central coast.

Happyjack says the group wants to understand the process that led to protection of the region and is also intrigued by arrangements to manage climate change.

The rainforest deal creates the Great Bear Forest Carbon Project, which manages and sells carbon credits, based on how much carbon is absorbed by protected timber.

Happyjack says one B.C. chief explained those credits created as many stewardship jobs as were formerly tied to logging, and the Waswanipi are optimistic about a similar deal covering the Broadback region of Quebec.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/sci-tech/quebec-first-nations-travel-to-b-c-to-learn-about-great-bear-rainforest-deal-1.2808737>

## Sudbury column: PM can save Ring of Fire

By [Star Staff](#)

Tuesday, March 8, 2016 1:02:46 EST AM



Justin Trudeau (File photo)

Ontario's "Ring of Fire" mineral belt, located in the province's remote James Bay Lowlands, is thought to hold more than \$60 billion of geological riches. When it was discovered in 2007, it was supposed to usher in a new era of prosperity for Northern Ontario, especially for the impoverished First Nations communities in the region.

Almost a decade later, the ore remains in the ground and doesn't appear to be coming out anytime soon. Thanks to the Ontario government's ineptitude, dysfunctional mining policy, lack of promised infrastructure spending and (to a much lesser extent) a broader commodity slump, American miner Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. left the province in frustration in 2013, permanently halting its proposed US\$3.3-billion chromite project.

The ultimate indignity for Ontario came last year, when Cliffs sold its US\$550-million investment in the Ring of Fire to junior miner Noront Resources Ltd. -- the only significant player left in the area -- for a bargain-basement price of US\$27.5 million.

At the present time, Noront is focused primarily on its bankable Eagles Nest nickel/copper/PGM property, valued at about \$10 billion, which can be developed only if a proposed east-west road is built into the mining camp and has put its world-class chromite deposits on the backburner for the foreseeable future.

Many analysts say that Ontario missed an extraordinary opportunity to establish a chromite industry during the commodity boom, and that it will be at least five or more years before any possible development occurs.

Junior Explorer KWG Resources holds the right to earn majority control into another promising chromite deposit, which is just in the initial stage of exploration with only eight or 10 drill holes to date.

The company recently lost a two-year court battle over exclusive control of the surface rights of its claim-staked properties on the best north south transport corridor into the Ring of Fire. That strategic route, which follows a ridge of higher ground - perfect for road or rail construction - through the surrounding swampy muskeg, is now open to any company or organization with the financial ability to build any transportation infrastructure with the required government and First Nations permission.

Recent announcements of the involvement of a Chinese government state-owned rail company to potentially finance and design a railroad on KWG's north-south claims are highly preliminary.

While the provincial Liberals shoulder most of the blame for delaying the best mineral discovery in Ontario's mining history in over a century, they did have a legitimate complaint: the previous federal government under Stephen Harper was not at the economic table in a meaningful way.

With the election of the Trudeau Liberals, who have a strong policy mandate to alleviate the living standards of Canada's First Nations communities, hopes for the development of the Ring of Fire and the enormous mineral potential of the entire northwestern region of Ontario has been renewed, especially with the federal government's commitment to include significant infrastructure spending in its budget March 22.

The mining companies in the Ring of Fire need infrastructure and so do the isolated aboriginal communities. If the Trudeau government worked in conjunction with Ontario and adopted a "Marshall Plan" -- the name of the American multibillion dollar initiative to help rebuild European countries after the Second World War -- to develop and modernize infrastructure in the entire isolated northwest, it would kill two birds with one stone.

A recent study by the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board that focused on the territories found that "each dollar spent on Northern economic infrastructure has the potential, if invested wisely, to generate \$22 in economic and fiscal benefits."

The standard of living for First Nations communities would dramatically improve, and a new round of mineral exploration and development would take place that would generate billions of dollars in tax revenue to pay back the government's investment. And then some.

Let's start with the potable water crisis in northwest Ontario. Within its first 100 days in office, the Trudeau government hit a home run by announcing it would fix the water problems at Neskantaga First Nation, a community near the Ring of Fire that has been on a boil water alert for an astonishing 20 years.

However, three of the other four isolated communities in the region are also on a boil water alert, including Eabometoong, which hasn't had potable water for 14 years. In fact, 35 of the 49 aboriginal communities in Northern Ontario had drinking water advisories in effect as of May 2015.

A 2011 report found that it would cost about \$1 billion to upgrade or replace the water and wastewater needs of all these communities. As Trudeau himself would probably say, "It's 2016." It is high time we gave these communities the potable water that the rest of Canada takes for granted.

Another need is roads. Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day has called for the construction of permanent roads to the many isolated First Nations communities in Northern Ontario, which would replace winter roads that are being affected by global warming. There is an old saying in the mining business that the best way to find new mineral deposits is by building roads.

The first road that should be built is an east-west corridor between the Ring of Fire and Pickle Lake, which would link up with four isolated First Nations communities. This would not only provide a cheaper way of bringing food, building supplies and diesel fuel to the communities, but would also allow Noront to proceed with development of its Eagle's Nest nickel-copper project in the Ring of Fire.

Developing this road shouldn't be difficult. In the early 1880s, it took Canada less than five years to build the Canadian Pacific railway from Ontario to Vancouver - a distance of roughly 4,200 kilometres. The distance between the Ring of Fire and the provincial highway system is about 280 kilometres.

However, connecting the many other First Nations communities throughout the northwest could also be done economically through the construction of forestry roads. Hartley Multamaki, vice president of Green Forest Management, said a rough estimate for primary forestry road construction, which is solid enough for huge trucks transporting logs or diesel fuel, would be around \$250,000 per kilometre. The ultimate cost could be somewhat higher because of obstacles like river crossings, swamps and access to aggregates.

So, taking Multamaki's estimate, the cost of building 1,100 kilometers of forestry road through standard Canadian Shield geography in Northwestern Ontario would be about \$275 million. Add in an additional \$60 million for the previously mentioned obstacles. So for \$335 million, you could connect a large number of isolated communities, especially in the geologically rich greenstone belts to the west of the Ring of Fire. Not an earth-shattering sum.

The final hard infrastructure need that should be addressed is access to grid power. The vast majority of Northwestern Ontario's isolated First Nations rely on costly diesel-generated power, which is heavily subsidized by governments. Electricity costs can run three to 10 times higher than grid power. It is also environmentally risky and limits expansion and business opportunities in these communities.

Wataynikaneyap Power is a First Nations-led transmission company that was originally started by Goldcorp Inc. five years ago to upgrade a major transmission line to their Musselwhite gold mine located 480 kms north of Thunder Bay. Twenty First Nations are participating in this advanced initiative.

The Ontario Power Authority estimates that grid connection would save roughly \$1 billion over the next 30 years compared to diesel generation.

It basically pays for itself. The four communities closest to the Ring of Fire -- Webequie, Nibinamik, Neskantaga and Eabametoong -- could be easily connected to this initiative at an acceptable increase in cost.

The aboriginal communities in northwestern Ontario are among the most impoverished in the country and yet their territories contain billions of dollars of untapped mineral wealth. Jim Franklin, the former chief geoscientist at the Geological Survey of Canada and one of the world's top experts on the Canadian Shield geology, predicted that at least \$140 billion worth of chromite and base metals will be discovered in the Ring of Fire and an additional \$140 to \$190 billion of gold in the many greenstone belts to the west of the camp.

By providing potable water, road access and grid power to these communities, the Trudeau government will also be benefiting the mining industry, which will discover explore and build the next generation of mines, providing the jobs and tax revenue to pay back these strategic infrastructure investments in record time.

*Stan Sudol is a Toronto-based communications consultant, mining policy analyst and publisher/editor of [www.republicofmining.com](http://www.republicofmining.com).*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thesudburystar.com/2016/03/08/sudbury-column-pm-can-save-ring-of-fire>

## **Inuit worried after Nunavut drops opposition to mines on caribou calving grounds**





Wild caribou roam the tundra near The Meadowbank Gold Mine located in the Nunavut on March 25, 2009. (Nathan Denette/THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Bob Weber, The Canadian Press

Published Tuesday, March 8, 2016 1:05PM EST

Last Updated Tuesday, March 8, 2016 2:47PM EST

IQALUIT, Nunavut -- Inuit groups and environmentalists have accused Nunavut of softening its protection of vital Arctic caribou herds by saying it will consider industrial development on sensitive calving grounds.

They're angry the change was made without consultation and only came to light during hearings on a land use plan for the territory.

"The (Kivalliq Wildlife Board) believes that the (government of Nunavut) has made a very irresponsible decision," said a letter to the government from the regulatory agency, which represents hunters in the central tundra and was created by the Nunavut land claim.

"This is an incredibly important issue and one surely worthy of proper consultation and public discussion. This discussion did not take place."

The board representing hunters in the Arctic islands also said calving grounds must be roped off to development.

"We do not feel that relying on protection measures alone will do the work necessary to support caribou populations," wrote the Qikiqtaaluk Wildlife Board.

"Inuit want the caribou grounds protected. Arguing otherwise would completely disrespect the multiple conversations Inuit have been involved in ... over multiple decades."

Similar concerns have come from the World Wildlife Fund, which said it was "disappointed" in the territory's decision.

It would be hard to overstate the importance of caribou to people in the central Arctic, who still depend on the great herds for food.

Those herds, however, are declining. The Bluenose East herd, which ranges across a wide swath of territory along the boundary of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, has dropped from about 50,000 animals on the calving grounds in 2006 to fewer than 20,000 today.

Calving grounds are considered both crucial to herd health and particularly susceptible to disturbance.

Hunter groups from communities such as Baker Lake have a long history of opposing mining development in those regions, which have major deposits of minerals such as uranium. Until recently, so did the government of Nunavut.

Now, the territory says it will consider such projects after full hearings are held and mitigation measures put in place.

"The government of Nunavut supports responsible development within calving grounds and key access corridors, and these will be on a case-by-case basis," Environment Minister Johnny Mike told the legislature Monday.

"It was very disappointing to learn the (government) changed its mind and no longer wants to protect calving grounds," says the letter from the Kivalliq board.

The World Wildlife Fund said the "mobile protection measures" which the government suggests could be deployed are unproven.

"There is no evidence to support its effectiveness," said the group in a release. "At a time when all the barren-ground caribou herds in Nunavut are crashing, experimenting with unproven protection measures is foolhardy."

Nunavut -- which has Canada's highest unemployment rate at 12.3 per cent as well as the associated social problems -- is desperate for economic development. The territory also has Canada's highest birthrate and needs jobs for young people.

The draft land use plan recommends protecting calving grounds that don't have high mineral potential and a designation requiring special mitigation measures for those that do.

The Inuit organization that monitors the Nunavut land claim is already in partnership with a Vancouver-based mining company that has a uranium deposit near Baker Lake.

As well, the hunter's group from Kugluktuk on the central Arctic coast -- where several gold projects are contemplated -- supports seasonal restrictions on development in

calving grounds. A similar stance has been taken by the N.W.T.'s Tlicho government, which also depends on central Arctic caribou herds.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/inuit-worried-after-nunavut-drops-opposition-to-mines-on-caribou-calving-grounds-1.2808586>

## Canada First Nations Water Issues Need To Be Fixed: UN

The Huffington Post Canada | By [Jessica Chin](#)

The United Nations and at least one NGO have called on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to address water issues in Canada's First Nations, citing human rights and cultural reasons.

Human Rights Watch called on Canada to [address the water advisories](#) affecting more than 100 First Nations communities in a "dispatch" report on its website.

Senior researcher Amanda Klasing wrote that Trudeau promised during his federal election campaign to end these advisories within five years.

"This isn't just a campaign promise but a [human rights obligation](#)," she wrote.

### Defending against the UN

Canada defended its record in February at the United Nations, which wrapped up its 10-year review of the country's commitment to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Thirty civil society organizations took part in the review, including [Grassy Narrows First Nations](#).

Deputy chief Randy Fobister, told The Huffington Post Canada he attended the hearings to pressure Ottawa to help clean mercury contamination in the water that has [poisoned fish and caused chronic health problems](#) in his community over the last 40 years.



*Grassy Narrows First Nation Chief Roger Fobister is pictured in front of portraits of former lieutenant-governors of Upper Canada which hang in the Ontario Legislature on Aug. 24 2015. (Photo: Chris Young/The Canadian Press)*

"It's very frustrating when you know every day the [water treatment] plant is unsafe," he said, adding that it's a "basic right" to have safe and clean drinking water.

The UN report said First Nations do not have proper water regulations. It called on the government to respect economic rights to water and its cultural significance for First Nations peoples.

"We are water, and we need water to stay alive."

In 2010, the Ontario Native Women's Association collected reflections from 11 grandmothers about the sacred relationship indigenous peoples have to water.

Inuit woman Rhoda Innuksuk said if water cannot be used to bathe, people cannot stay healthy.

"We are water, and we need water to stay alive," she said.

Women in particular are "carriers of water," because women's bodies have the capacity to host and sustain the life force water represents.

"You can't have birth without water," Métis woman Maria Campbell said.

"That time between the spirit world and being born, you can't have that without water."

### **State of emergency**

In February, a First Nation community in northwestern Ontario called a state of emergency due to radioactive particles and higher than normal lead levels in its drinking water, according to APTN News.

"It's a very scary issue."

Northwest Angle #33 First Nation received a [do not consume advisory](#), which is a notch above a boil-water advisory.

The community also has high cancer rates — believed to be linked to the water.

“It’s a very scary issue,” land manager Norma Girard told the news outlet.

“How many more of our people do we have to see suffer and die from cancer?”

Northwest Angle #33 has been handing out bottled water to residents since 2011, funded by “wherever we can find it,” Girard said.

Residents have been relying on portable water-treatment facilities for the last 15 years, which were put in place at the time as a [temporary solution](#),” she added.

### **Vitamin-water donations**

Shoal Lake 40, an isolated reserve on the Manitoba-Ontario border, has been under a boil-water advisory for 18 years. Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett recently announced the community would be getting an [all-weather road](#) connecting the community to the mainland.

A company called Unique Foods Canada also announced last week it would be donating 30,000 bottles of its vitamin-enriched water to Shoal Lake 40, and to Six Nations First Nation in Ontario, according to Vice News.



*Kavin Redsky, Shoal Lake 40 First Nation water plant operator, prepares to treat water from the lake with chlorine in one of the community's ten water treatment plants. (Photo: John Woods/The Canadian Press)*

Six Nations Chief Ava Hill said that community was grateful for the donation, but Daryl Redsky of Shoal Lake 40 says it [isn't a long-term solution](#).

"Oh heck! So we don't need a water treatment plant, we'll just get water bottles sent," Redsky said. "It's a long-term benefit to the company, but it's not a long-term solution to our community."

First Nations peoples have also faced the threat of [water privatization](#), or public-private partnerships between companies and the government, according to the Council of Canadians.

In 2006, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs announced it would be pursuing partnerships with the private sector to upgrade infrastructure on reserves, after natural gas company Terasen Utilities created a new subsidiary called First Nations Utility Services.

The UN report called on Canada to live up to its commitment to ensure First Nations peoples have safe access to drinking water and to sanitation, while ensuring their participation in the managing process.

—*With files from the Canadian Press, and The Huffington Post Canada's Althia Raj*

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/03/09/canada-first-nations-water\\_n\\_9420970.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/03/09/canada-first-nations-water_n_9420970.html)

## **Drinking water on First Nations reserves an ongoing problem in B.C., says professor**

**In February, 26 communities were under boil water advisories — some for over 10 years**

By On The Coast, CBC News Posted: Mar 08, 2016 8:44 PM PT| Last Updated: Mar 08, 2016 8:44 PM PT

Many First Nations reserve across Canada face challenges when it comes to water. People who live on the Kahkewistahaw First Nation, 150 kilometres east of Regina, have had to walk or drive to the water treatment plant to fill jugs with drinkable filtered water since June 2015.

The deplorable state of drinking water on many First Nations reserves in B.C. is well documented.

At the end of February 2016, 26 communities in B.C. were under boil water advisories — some of them dating back 10 years.

"The issue and the challenge is that even though that water comes from pristine sources, some of those sources are susceptible to microbial contamination," UBC engineering professor Madjid Mohseni told On The Coast host Stephen Quinn.

"Those communities are often very remote ... much of the funding needs to be paid by the ratepayers or the users, and when you have only tens of people living there, it's very difficult for them to afford installing a treatment system."

Mohseni is a co-founder of RES'EAU-WaterNET, a program that works directly with small communities to find solutions for access to water.

His work focuses on working with communities, identifying their concerns and finding local human capacity for water treatment.

He and his students try to present various water treatment options to the communities to see which ones would work best given their human and financial capacity.

"'One solution fits all' does not work," he said. "Depending on what is in the water, the type of treatment that is required would be different."

Mohseni will be presenting on his work March 9 as part of the UBC Centennial Emerging Research Workshop on Water.

To hear the full story, click the audio labelled: 'One size fits all' approach won't solve First Nations water crisis: professor

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/first-nations-water-solutions-1.3482568>

## **Southern Hudson Bay polar bear agreement under review again**

**"I expect to see a good agreement amongst all parties"**

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, March 09, 2016 - 4:00 pm



The southern Hudson Bay polar bear population co-management plan is up for review again this year, Johnny Mike told the legislature this week. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)



It took years to draft an agreement on the co-management of the southern Hudson Bay polar bear population, but Nunavut and neighbouring jurisdictions will be back at it again this year.

In November 2014, Nunavut, Quebec's Inuit and Cree territories and Ontario [settled on a co-management system](#) that set an annual quota of 45 polar bears.

But with that plan set to expire in November 2016, those groups are starting to review the agreement once again.

Nunavut's environment minister said the territorial government is working closely with other jurisdictions who together manage the southern Hudson Bay polar bear population.

"I'm very concerned about this issue, the new quota, and to make sure that the total allowable harvest is followed through because there's international interest with polar bear management," Johnny Mike told the legislative assembly March 7 during question period.

"I expect to see a good agreement amongst all parties, along with the federal minister of environment."

The southern Hudson Bay's polar bear subpopulation is among the most complex in Canada because it involves a territory, two provinces, two Inuit land claim areas, and Cree hunting rights under Treaty 9.

The last agreement settled on a smaller quota than what was previously in place, allotting 22 polar bears to Nunavik hunters, 20 for Sanikiluaq (Nunavut), three for Ontario and two for Quebec Cree.

The last of those 20 bears was caught in Sanikiluaq last week, Hudson Bay MLA Allan Rumbolt said in the legislature March 6.

The most recent estimates peg the southern Hudson Bay polar bear population at about 951 bears. Western science calls the population stable, while Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit suggests the population has increased.

As part of the Government of Nunavut's new proposed polar bear management plan, the territory aims to give weight to both schools of thought.

Specific to the southern Hudson Bay population, the GN recommends increased cooperation among all jurisdictions along with a review of quotas once a new inventory is complete.

The proposed plan also lists a priority to "help Quebec to develop a management plan and system to ensure that the total allowable harvest is respected and followed and all harvesting is reported."

That's likely a reference to a period in early 2011 when hunters from Inukjuak harvested about 60 bears due to an increase in sightings along that stretch of Hudson Bay.

Nunavut's proposed polar bear management plan is now the focus of a written public hearing, organized by the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. You can see submissions [here](#).

The plan was developed co-operatively in recent years with the input of community groups and hunters and trappers organizations, to replace a memorandum of understanding used to manage the territory's polar bears up until this point.

One of the plan's major priorities is to improve the collection and use of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in polar bear management.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674southern\\_hudson\\_bay\\_polar\\_bear\\_agreement\\_under\\_review\\_again/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674southern_hudson_bay_polar_bear_agreement_under_review_again/)

## **Two Aboriginal Communities Take Their Fight Against Energy Companies to Canada's Supreme Court**

By [Hilary Beaumont](#)

March 10, 2016 | 12:42 pm

Two First Nations have won the right to take their battles against the federal government and energy companies to the Supreme Court of Canada.

The win comes as Canada attempts to both reset its relationship with First Nations and figure out its national energy strategy — and the case could set a precedent for how major Canadian energy projects are decided in the future.

On Thursday, Canada's highest court approved the joint application by Clyde River and Chippewa of the Thames to be heard by the court's nine judges. And in the meantime, a lawyer for the First Nations is asking the energy companies to halt their projects until the Supreme Court decides the case.

"I'm still smiling — it's awesome," Chippewa of the Thames band councillor Myeengun Henry told VICE News after he heard the news. "By going to the Supreme Court of Canada, we're going to make some huge noise that's going to help other First Nations across Canada."

Across the country, a long list of First Nations are waging court battles against the federal government and the National Energy Board (NEB), which approves energy projects in Canada. In this case, while the two First Nations are on opposite sides of the country — with Clyde River in Nunavut to the north, and Chippewa of the Thames in southern Ontario — both say the federal government failed to consult them on major energy projects on their land.

'We're going to make some huge noise that's going to help other First Nations across Canada.'

"They are two separate cases, but we applied to the Supreme Court together," Henry said. "We looked at Clyde River's scenario and it's very similar to ours, so we thought it was better to team up."

In Clyde River, hunters tell stories of seals with pus in their ears, made deaf by seismic blasts in the '70s and '80s. Now, three seismic testing companies have been awarded permits to search for oil off the coast of the tiny town.

But the Inuit community says the loud blasts from seismic testing will alter the migration patterns of whales and other animals, which would dramatically change the way of life for the 1,000 mostly Inuit residents who are reliant on hunting these animals.

The NEB gave the seismic testing companies permission to start exploration this spring, but Clyde River says the federal government didn't consult them about the project, even though Canadian law states it has a fiduciary duty to do so.

When Clyde River first applied to the Supreme Court last fall, former mayor Jerry Natanine told VICE News his community would do whatever it took to block the seismic testing, including going out on boats to stop the companies.

"You know the seismic route is gonna be more than 12 miles offshore and that's pretty far away to go by boat, but that would be our next step," he said.

Meanwhile in southern Canada, Chippewa of the Thames is waging a war against a different energy company. The NEB approved an application by pipeline giant Enbridge to reverse the flow of Line 9 through their territory, allowing it to carry bitumen from the Alberta oil sands.

But the First Nation says the federal government failed to consult them directly about the project, and they worry about oil spills. Meanwhile, activists have been manually closing the valves along Line 9 in an attempt to stop oil flowing through the pipeline.

"I'm just over the moon happy with the Supreme Court of Canada decision," Clyde River lawyer Nader Hasan told VICE News. "But look, it's important to keep it in perspective. We have a lot more work to be done."

Thursday's ruling means the court agrees that both cases involve an issue of national and public importance — not that the country's highest court agrees with the First Nations' arguments about the federal government's duty to consult, Hasan said.

The lawyer said he would now ask the seismic testing companies to halt their activities planned for this spring, and if that doesn't work, he'll ask the highest court to order the companies to halt exploration to preserve the current conditions on the ground.

In January, the federal government extended an olive branch to another First Nation that said it hadn't consulted them. The Tsleil-Waututh First Nation in British Columbia argued in court that the NEB didn't properly assess the impact of increased tanker traffic. Hoping to quell tensions, the Attorney General of Canada asked to pause the court case for three months so it could consult directly with the First Nation.

**Direct Link:** <https://news.vice.com/article/two-aboriginal-communities-take-their-fight-against-energy-companies-to-canadas-supreme-court>

## **First Nations groups urge Ottawa to block N.B. crude export terminal**

SHAWN McCARTHY - GLOBAL ENERGY REPORTER

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Wednesday, Mar. 09, 2016 6:23PM EST

Last updated Wednesday, Mar. 09, 2016 6:26PM EST

Three Mi'kmaq communities from Quebec are appealing to the federal government in their effort to block a plan by an Alberta company to build a rail and marine terminal to export Western Canadian crude from a remote northern New Brunswick port.

Calgary-based Secure Energy Services Inc. is proposing to spend up to \$400-million to bring two unit trains of crude per day to Belledune, N.B., where an export terminal would have capacity to ship 120,000 barrels a day of crude to international markets.

Three First Nation communities, members of the Mi'gmawei Mawiommi Secretariat, sent a letter to Environment Minister Catherine McKenna and Transport Minister Marc Garneau, urging the federal government to consult with them on the "risks and impacts" of the project.

The Mi'kmaq opposition comes as Alberta oil producers and Premier Rachel Notley express increasing frustration over their inability to win support for their efforts to get

their crude to tidewater in order to diversify their export market away from a near-total reliance on the United States.

Municipal officials in Quebec and British Columbia, as well as First Nations and environmentalists, have mounted major hurdles to two projects now under review: TransCanada Corp.'s proposed Energy East pipeline to Saint John and Kinder Morgan Canada's expansion of the TransMountain line to Vancouver.

Secure Energy has won provincial environmental approval for its Chaleur Terminal project, but the Mi'kmaq have challenged that decision in provincial court, with a hearing set for next week. The company is "evaluating the project and actively seeking commercial support," Chaleur Terminals vice-president John Levson said Wednesday. Once it makes a final investment decision, it would take two years to commence operations, he said.

The Mi'kmaq say they have aboriginal title and treaty rights in the area that must be respected, notably along the Restigouche River that flows into Chaleur Bay by the Gaspé Peninsula and northern New Brunswick. "The project presents a large number of serious and potentially irreversible negative impacts to our lands, waters and way of life," Chief Scott Martin, chair of the secretariat, said in the letter. Specifically, the communities are worried about salmon spawning grounds that could be destroyed if there was a derailment that spilled crude into the river.

He urged the federal government to conduct its own environmental review of the project under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and the Fisheries Act, and threatened to launch legal action against Ottawa if "swift and immediate action" is not taken by the federal government.

"We should not in this day and age have to live with these kinds of major threats to our rivers, our communities and our way of life – transporting oil by rail should be a thing of the past," he said in a news release Wednesday.

A spokeswoman for Ms. McKenna said the project did not require a federal review but that the port authority of Belledune had responsibility to determine whether the project – which would be on federal lands – was likely to cause significant adverse environmental impacts.

As opposition to pipelines and crude by rail continues from environmentalists, First Nations and municipalities, Conservative MPs and senators have been hammering the Liberal government in Parliament over what they describe as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's failure to stand up for Alberta and its oil industry.

At a Senate hearing on Wednesday, Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr faced a barrage of criticism from Conservative members who want speedy approval of the Energy East pipeline, although the National Energy Board has yet to begin formal hearings on the project. Mr. Carr said the Liberal government believes that one of its "principle

responsibilities” is to “move our natural resources to market sustainably.” But he said the new government felt it had to strengthen the environmental review process to win public support for resource infrastructure.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/first-nations-groups-urge-ottawa-to-block-nb-crude-export-terminal/article29119859/>

## Supreme Court to hear first nation's appeal over Line 9



Activists lock themselves to an Enbridge Line 9 valve site east of Sarnia, Ont., Monday, Dec. 21, 2015. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/HO)

The Canadian Press

Published Thursday, March 10, 2016 4:04PM EST

TORONTO -- The country's top court has agreed to hear an appeal from an Ontario first nation over a controversial pipeline that runs through one of Canada's most populous corridors.

The Supreme Court of Canada has granted the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation leave to appeal a decision of a lower court regarding Enbridge Inc's Line 9 pipeline.

The legal case pits the first nation against Enbridge (TSX:ENB), the National Energy Board and the Attorney General of Canada.

The aging Line 9, which runs between Sarnia, Ont., and Montreal, drew much opposition when Enbridge sought to reverse its flow and increase its capacity in 2012.

The company nonetheless won the National Energy Board's approval, cleared regulatory obligations and has begun operating the pipeline in its new configuration.

The case involves a question over the duty of the Crown to consult and accommodate first nations on concerns related to the potential effects of the pipeline on their aboriginal and treaty rights.

The Chippewas of the Thames First Nation has said it wasn't consulted properly over the pipeline that runs through its traditional territory. It also argues that the case has significant implications for other first nations in similar situations.

After the National Energy Board approved Enbridge's application, the first nation appealed the board's decision at the Federal Court of Appeal but was dismissed in October.

The Supreme Court will now hear the Chippewas of the Thames' appeal of that decision.

The first nation welcomed the news on Thursday, but noted that it still had work ahead.

"The path before us is still long as we continue to seek protection of our aboriginal and treaty rights," said chief Leslee White-Eye. "We need to bring home that we are not acting alone in the action, nor that it is for our sole benefit but an attempt to seek protection of our water -- these energy developments are one of many across the nation impacting our rights."

Enbridge said it was "very limited" in what it could say about the matter as it was before the courts, but emphasized that it was committed to engaging with first nations.

"Irrespective of this outcome, Enbridge is absolutely committed to fostering a strengthened relationship with the COTTEN built upon openness, respect and mutual trust, and to working through outstanding issues to find mutually agreeable solutions," spokesman Graham White told The Canadian Press.

"We will continue our efforts to engage with Indigenous communities above and beyond what is required by regulators to build trust and address any concerns or input they may have with our projects or operations."

The company has also said Line 9 has been operating safely for more than 40 years and noted that it recently went through several upgrades following a three-year consultation on its reversal.

Line 9 has operated since 1976, first pumping oil eastward. Its flow was reversed in the late 90s, in response to market conditions, to pump imported crude westward.

It now supplies Alberta crude to Suncor Energy's Montreal refinery.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/business/supreme-court-to-hear-first-nation-s-appeal-over-line-9-1.2812281>

**Liberals should pay Indigenous people to be 'earth stewards,'" said Green's May**





**Brandi Morin**

**APTN National News**

Green party leader Elizabeth May says the Justin Trudeau Liberal government should pay Indigenous people to be “earth stewards.”

May said Indigenous people are already on the frontline of the climate battle, but they are there at great cost.

“In case after case, time after time it’s Indigenous people who are on the frontline without payment and, on the contrary, at great cost,” said May. “Turning that on its head and saying let’s acknowledge the earth stewards of Turtle Island, our Indigenous peoples, not only do we learn a lot through traditional knowledge as a Western society grounded in Western science, but this merging of Western science and traditional knowledge will enrich our understanding of ecosystems and help us to protect them.”

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and U.S. President Barack Obama are expected to endorse a continental strategy on climate change Thursday in Washington, DC.

May said as climate talks continue moving forward, the Liberal government needs to make sure it doesn’t leave Indigenous people behind.

“You can’t get a national solution when you leave out key decision makers, so I’m hoping the Liberals will move in that direction,” said May. “Have they got it quite right in terms of their engagement of First Nations, Metis and Inuit? I’ll leave that to Indigenous peoples to say.”

Assembly of First Nations Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day said he is concerned Ottawa seems to be pushing ahead with climate change plans without engaging in a real way with First Nation people and communities.

“What we need to see is that governments are including us in the front end and not just having a pre-meeting for show, we need to see formal inclusion,” said Day.

He said that life is changing rapidly on the land and animals are being listed as species of concern at alarming rates and some nearing extinction.

First Nations in Ontario are also witnessing a rapid change in temperatures is creating serious stress on communities already gripped by crisis on issues like clean drinking water, poverty and educational deficiencies.

“We just need to look around, you see the physical changes but you also have to factor in the social impacts. There’s some very real severe impacts to climate change right across the board,” said Day.

The regional chief agrees with May that investing with First Nations to help combat climate change will help catapult green economies and solve longstanding issues.

“First Nations have not been afforded our fair share of resource development revenues to the point where we have the capacity to contribute to the solutions. Now we have to be very clear to the prime minister that we need the resources and we need to build a new business model that looks at the issue of dealing with climate change as an essential cost,” said Day. “That will be part of every sort of business model that the government and First Nations endorse going forward. Even if it’s retail, a restaurant, a tire store or a major development.”

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/03/10/liberals-should-pay-indigenous-people-to-be-earth-stewards-said-greens-may/>

## **Land Claims & Treaty Rights**

### **Protesters camp out near Benny, Ont. in opposition to logging on aboriginal lands**

**Clyde McNichol says the forest in Benny belongs to his ancestors**

By Samantha Lui, CBC News Posted: Mar 04, 2016 5:00 AM ET| Last Updated: Mar 04, 2016 11:48 AM ET

A First Nations man and a small group of supporters have camped out near Benny, Ont. to protest against logging in the area.

Clyde McNichol and his wife Barbara have set up camp by the small town just an hour north of Sudbury. They've been there since Saturday. They intend to stay until the end of the week.

For the past year, the couple has been spearheading a campaign to stop companies like Eacom Timber from taking away trees from the forest. Last April, they saw loggers come into Benny where they had set up a camp for First Nations youth.

Clyde, who is from the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, says the land belongs to his ancestors and government should be consulting with the First Nations community before any work is done in the area.

"This is still native land. We never gave up this land," he said.

"That was all written in those treaties [that said] 'Yes you can, but you have to come and talk to us to agree that you can abstract that part.'"

Working on a compromise

The issue has led the McNichols to reach out to their MPP, France G  linas.

The Nickel Belt MPP says she has been working with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry on getting the situation sorted.

Signs at Camp Eagle Nest

The McNichols have created signs asking for companies to stop logging and doing aerial application in the area. (Samantha Lui/CBC)

She added that the ministry — and even those from Atikameksheng — weren't aware that some of their members were in Benny.

"It's really difficult and not working out as well as we would like to," she said.

"[We] tried to talk to the logging companies themselves. They tried to be as reasonable as they can. At the same time, they had a valid license to go log there."

In an email statement to CBC News, Bill Mauro, the minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, said, "My ministry will continue to work with the Atikameksheng Anishnawbeck Chief and council and Eacom to ensure identified values are protected during forestry operations, while still allowing for sustainable forest harvesting to proceed as planned."

Christine Leduc, the director of public affairs from Eacom, also said the company will continue to work co-operatively with the Ministry of Natural Resources and the leadership of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek "to maintain harmonious relations."

Preserving the land means 'everything'

For Barbara McNichol, preserving the land means everything to her and her husband.

"Too much has threatened our way of living in balance with other species in the land," she said.

"For me right now, I don't see myself going anywhere else. This is where I want to be. This is what I want to leave for my children, for Clyde's family, for anybody who really wants to recapture the way of living on the land."

And while few have come to visit their camp site, Clyde says he'll continue his fight for as long as it takes.

"I'm not going away," he said. "As native people, we still have our rights and our culture."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/benny-forest-protesters-1.3473370>

## Other First Nations leaders challenge Algonquins of Ontario land claim agreement

A historic land claim agreement in principle struck by the Algonquins of Ontario with the...

Mar 04, 2016 — by [The Associated Press](#)



The largest land claim being negotiated in Ontario covers a territory of 36,000 square kilometres in eastern Ontario and includes Parliament Hill. Photo: tsaproject, Creative Commons, some rights reserved

Mar 04, 2016 — A historic land claim agreement in principle struck by the Algonquins of Ontario with the federal and provincial governments is being denounced as fraudulent and illegal.

Chiefs of a number of Iroquois and Algonquin First Nations say that the vast majority of the Algonquins of Ontario are not actually Algonquin or even aboriginal.

The chiefs say even Prime Minister Justin Trudeau could technically qualify as an Algonquin under the loose criteria set to determine eligibility to participate in a ratification vote on the proposed deal.

The claim is the largest being negotiated in the province and covers a territory of 36,000 square kilometres in eastern Ontario, including Parliament Hill. (The Canadian Press)

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**Direct Link:** <http://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/31203/20160304/other-first-nations-leaders-challenge-algonquins-of-ontario-land-claim-agreement>

## **B.C. First Nation vows to stop herring roe fishery in its territory**

By Randy Shore, Vancouver Sun March 3, 2016



Sliammon Chief Councillor Clint Williams says herring stocks have not recovered enough to allow commercial fishery in its traditional territory.

The Tla'amin First Nation has served notice that it will take action to halt any commercial herring roe fishery in its traditional territory.

A band council resolution sent to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) says a commercial fishery would cause “irreversible damage” to a herring stock that is just showing signs of recovery after a catastrophic collapse in the 1980s.

“If the decision of Fisheries and Oceans Canada is to proceed with the commercial herring fishery, Tla’amin Nation will take steps to restrain the mismanagement of the fishery,” the resolution reads.

A DFO manager alerted the band’s fisheries manager Kevin Timothy to the possibility of a commercial opening in waters near Powell River.

“That set some alarm bells ringing for us,” said Chief Councillor Clint Williams. “It’s been 30 years and we are only now starting to see some patchy spawn here, but nothing like it was traditionally. We are going to do whatever we can to stop this and allow the healing that needs to take place.”

DFO’s Integrated Fisheries Management Plan supports a commercial harvest in the Strait of Georgia, based on scientific advice and consultation with First Nations and commercial harvesters. When openings take place depends on in-season assessments of herring stocks and spawn along with communication with the industry and First Nations, according to a DFO spokesperson.

DFO confirmed receipt of the Tla’amin resolution and is in the process of scheduling a meeting with the band.

Several other First Nations have succeeded in halting commercial openings, but not without concerted action.

Last year, the Haida First Nation won an injunction in Federal Court to stop a planned herring roe fishery in its territory. The ruling noted the DFO had failed to properly consult the Haida in their planning process.

The Heiltsuk First Nation occupied a DFO regional office for three days last March and threatened to escalate the conflict on the water with commercial fishermen before the fishery in their territory was cancelled and DFO agreed to a joint management plan. The Heiltsuk maintain herring stocks are not sufficiently recovered to allow commercial fishery in their waters this year.

“They are having a hard time finding herring to fish; there are planes in the air and they use sonar,” said Williams. “Traditionally, you didn’t need any of that. To us, that screams that the herring need more time.”

**Direct Link:**

<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/first+nation+vows+stop+herring+fishery+territory/11760943/story.html>

## **First Nations hold bargaining power in pipeline decisions**



## Chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan suggests First Nations need stake in pipeline process

By Kyle Bakx, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 05, 2016 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Mar 05, 2016 5:00 AM ET



Blaine Favel spoke in Calgary this week at the Western Canada Oil & Gas Industry Roadmap Event. (Kyle Bakx/CBC)

Blaine Favel can't help but speak his mind when it comes to First Nations and Canada's oil and gas industry. Favel supports pipelines, but feels First Nations need a better deal to back these large infrastructure projects.

Favel is the chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan and former grand chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.

In front of 400 oil and gas industry members in Calgary this week, Favel didn't shy away from expressing his thoughts about what needs to change. He criticized the former federal government because it "didn't deal with Indians very well. I couldn't believe the stupidity of that. They were not trying to be kind to First Nations people particularly along pipeline routes."

He thinks First Nations need an ownership stake in oil and gas projects not only to fulfill the economic aspirations of some aboriginal groups, but because recent legal decisions confirm they have a right to be at the table in making decisions about projects crossing their land..

This gives them bargaining power in pipeline routes and decisions, and means every pipeline project could be held up in court until they are brought into decision-making and give consent.

The responsible approach would be to involve them from the start, he said.

A 2014 Supreme Court decision on the land title claims of the Tsilhqot'in First Nation [suggests](#) the purpose of consultation should be to seek consent. Meanwhile, a 2014 United Nations (UN) declaration on indigenous people recommends free, prior and informed consent. The Canadian government has said this does not constitute veto power, since the declaration is an [aspirational document](#).



**Here are six questions we posed to Favel.**

**The ownership issue with pipelines, is that a way for more First Nations to get on board with these proposed projects?**

Absolutely. I think First Nations leadership has been asking for ownership of assets on their traditional lands and participation so they can combat poverty. There have been requests for an ownership interest from the very first conversations 20 years ago. It continues, but now it is more important because the law has advanced so much that First Nations people are close to having veto power over projects, so responsible business people and responsible governments should be looking at this more seriously.

**With Enbridge's Northern Gateway project or Kinder Morgan's TransMountain project, do you think there would be more First Nations on side if there was an ownership stake offered?**



**What do you think 'consent of First Nations' means when it comes to these projects?**

The UN declaration says free, prior and informed consent, which means they have to be aware of the project, the project's implications, they have to agree with the project. So that sets a very high bar for these companies and the government has to be there. The government of Alberta, the government of B.C., and the government of Canada have to be there helping these companies. The companies can't do it on their own.

**Do you think First Nations have veto power?**

Pretty close, I think pretty close. If you talk to energy leaders, the environmental movement and the social consent issues, are important to them. But who has the legal power to stop a pipeline? First Nations chiefs.

## **What difference can the new Prime Minister make in these negotiations?**



## **Will offering an ownership stake really convince some First Nations to support a pipeline?**

I think that is one component of it. I think there are five or six elements. Ownership is one, strong environmental safety record, employment, contracts, training, and being involved in the business cycle of the pipeline opposed to the one year that it is built.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/blaine-favel-first-nations-pipelines-veto-1.3476221>

## **First Nations self-government overdue says law expert**

**Currently, both the government and courts have to rely on the Indian Act, crafted in 1876**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2016 9:00 AM AT Last Updated: Mar 07, 2016 4:42 PM AT



Borrow said under self-governance, meeting nation to nation would become better defined. ([www.sfu.ca](http://www.sfu.ca))

A Canadian indigenous law expert says First Nations self-government is long overdue and will benefit both the Crown and indigenous people in this country.

John Borrows is the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law and a law professor at the University of Victoria. He spoke about the issue of self-governance in Fredericton this week.

Since the constitution was signed, he said the Supreme Court of Canada has issued about 45 or 50 judgements regarding indigenous rights, but in all those decisions they have skirted around the issue of governance and whether aboriginal people have the right to self government.

But he said it has been implied.

"The courts are requiring the Crown to consult and accommodate aboriginal peoples, they are saying they are landowners and that you have treaty rights to hunt and fish, and make certain decisions in relationship to that," he said.

"These all imply governance."

Borrows said it's time to go to the next step and declare that aboriginal peoples have the right to self-government in Canada.

"When that's clear, we'll get rid of some of the internal challenges that aboriginal people have started to be cleaned up."

Currently, both the government and courts have to rely on the Indian Act to help make decisions. It's legislation passed in 1876 and Borrows said it is in no way equipped to meet the challenges of modern-day life.

"If aboriginal people were recognized as having the right to self governance under the constitution, we'd be able to get away from that Indian Act," he said.

He said self-governance would also clear up any confusion over who governments should consult with since there would be a clear process. He warns that self-governance wouldn't mean all issues would disappear, but it would outline a process for dealing with them.

"Until self-governance is recognized more explicitly, we really don't have a way of organizing that dissent and organizing those differences in opinion, not that they'd go away, but it would at least throw up some clarity," Borrows explained.

Critics have said New Brunswick is lagging behind in recognizing aboriginal peoples rights, but so is the rest of Canada he said. But the first place to start for improvement is the 94 calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"A lot effort went in over many years to be able to derive a sense of what the priorities should be," Borrows said.

## **Meeting nation to nation**

Borrows said under self-governance, meeting nation to nation would become better defined.

"What you really need underneath a nation to nation relationship are the protocols for diplomacy," he said.

"You would have channels that are both explicit and even back channels to be able to get information with one and other."

He said self-governance would give both sides the necessary framework to hold each accountable.

Borrows points to countries like Australia, New Zealand and Norway and the self-governance aboriginal peoples in those nations have.

"Again, all we have in Canada is the Indian Act. We're very impoverished and of course the provinces aren't much better."

"We're very impoverished"- *John Borrows*

Not only is the Indian Act out of date, but Borrows said you have to remember it was designed to assimilate indigenous peoples.

"You can't go forward with a respectful process when you've got a document that was designed to erase the presence of so called indians in this country," he said.

Borrows said he is optimistic Canada is very close to moving forward with self-government.

"The Crown wants it and First Nations themselves are in the grassroots level experimenting and finding their feet on this," he said.

He said Canada is on the cusp of the change that is needed and the federal government is committed to changes both big and small.

## **Crown equally responsible**

"It's not just in parliament we are seeing this, education, health care, different social services, they are all being pushed, so it's not just a top down edict that's going on."

He does hope self-governance leads to more trust, both inside and outside the First Nations community.

"I think there's a lot of mistrust by First Nations, Inuit and Metis people about their governments. Part of that is born from the fact they are living with this Indian Act that's not connected to their ways of processing disputes," he said.

From trust comes respect and Borrows said the Crown is equally responsible to help create that atmosphere.

"This is not just an aboriginal issue. It's time responsible government was extended to all Canadians."

### **Corrections**

- An earlier version of this story featured an image of a document which was said to be the Indian Act. However, the wrong document was depicted and has therefore been removed.

Mar 07, 2016 4:10 PM AT

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/first-nations-government-law-1.3474834>

## **Cree Nation sues over 48,000 square kms of northeastern Ontario**

By Staff The Canadian Press

March 7, 2016 2:32 pm

Updated: March 7, 2016 4:49 pm



Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, pictured Dec. 15, 2014, calls the suit the latest chapter in the Cree Nation's struggle to ensure that its pre-existing rights.

TORONTO – The James Bay Cree Nation has filed a lawsuit seeking title to about 48,000 square kilometres of land in northeastern Ontario.

The lawsuit, which has been filed with Ontario's Superior Court of Justice, names the federal and Ontario governments and claims damages of \$495 million in relation to the Eeyou Istchee-Ontario lands.

The suit claims the two governments have “unjustifiably infringed” on the Cree Nation's title and rights – and breached their trust and obligations to the First Nation.

The suit also claims Ontario and Canada have been “unjustly enriched as a result of their breaches of the plaintiffs' Aboriginal title and other Aboriginal rights.... and the plaintiffs have suffered.”

The claims outlined in the suit have not been tested in court.

A spokesman for Ontario's ministry of the attorney general says lawyers are reviewing the claim, but Brendan Crawley adds it would be inappropriate to comment further as the matter is before the courts.

Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come calls the suit the latest chapter in the Cree Nation's struggle to ensure that its pre-existing rights over all of its traditional lands are properly respected.

“The imposition of the Ontario-Quebec boundary cut through our homeland of Eeyou Istchee,” Coon Come said Monday in a release.

“Our people have used, occupied, governed and protected these lands in Ontario since time immemorial, but our rights in these lands have never been addressed in any treaty,” he said.



**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2562435/cree-nation-sues-over-48000-square-kms-of-northeastern-ontario/>

## Province should resolve grey area in aboriginal hunting rights, 2 judges say

### 4 New Brunswick cabinet ministers refused to comment on the Court of Queen's Bench justices' comments

By Jacques Poitras, [CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 08, 2016 1:24 PM AT Last Updated: Mar 08, 2016 3:45 PM AT



Two Court of Queen's Bench judges have called on the New Brunswick government to do more to resolve legal grey areas about how aboriginal and treaty rights apply to hunting in the province. (CBC)

Two Court of Queen's Bench judges have called on the province to do more to resolve legal ambiguities about how aboriginal and treaty rights apply to hunting.

The judges, in two January rulings on separate cases, say the courts aren't capable of handling the complex constitutional issues at play.

Justice Hugh McLellan called for "a more effective, timely and fair method" to resolve cases in his Jan. 22 decision on the conviction of a Mi'kmaq man with roots in Nova Scotia for hunting in the Saint John area.

And in a Jan. 27 ruling, Justice Terrence Morrison complained about the "frailties and inadequacies" of litigating treaty rights through the summary conviction of a member of the Woodstock First Nation who traded a moose carcass for a Dodge Durango.

A provincial government spokesperson said none of the ministers who deal with aboriginal hunting issues raised would comment.

"This issue is before the courts and therefore it would not be appropriate to provide further comment at this time," said Veronique Lacasse, who wrote that she was speaking



for the Department of Natural Resources, the Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, the Department of Public Safety and the Office of the Attorney General.



Aboriginal Affairs Minister Ed Doherty said last week the Gallant government's target was having First Nations involved in all decision making. (Jacques Poitras/CBC)

Just last week, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Ed Doherty was touting the Gallant government's consultations with First Nations.

He told a legislative committee that all recommendations sent to the Liberal cabinet "are looked at through the lens of aboriginal treaty rights and the duty to consult."

"Our target, in fact, is to have First Nations involved in all decision-making," he added.

"That's the ultimate goal."

## **Legal grey areas**

But the two rulings suggest there are still substantial legal grey areas in how the province sees those rights when it prosecutes indigenous people for hunting violations.

In one case, McLellan struck down the jail time and fine imposed on Stephen Bernard, originally from the Shubenacadie First Nation in Nova Scotia. Bernard was convicted of hunting without a licence in Saint John in 2004.

McLellan pointed out Bernard's case has dragged on for years, with the Crown stopping and then re-starting the prosecution while other aboriginal rights case were before the courts.

The specific case against Bernard hinged on whether he was outside the traditional hunting grounds of his community.

McLellan ruled Bernard was too far from Shubenacadie territory to be exempt from New Brunswick's requirement for a provincial hunting licence.

But he agreed with the provincial court trial judge that the case "illustrates the need to find a more effective, timely and fair method to resolve questions between aboriginals and the state over aboriginal rights."

"Such questions lend themselves to civil resolutions, perhaps in the mode of a civil or administrative order or finding so that the parties can determine their respect rights."

McLellan upheld Bernard's conviction, but quashed the sentence of seven days in jail and a \$2,000 fine.

## **Case revolves on sale of moose carcass**

In the other case, Justice Morrison upheld a provincial court judge's decision to stop the prosecution for illegal possession and sale of a moose carcass against Michael Reynolds, a Maliseet member of the Woodstock First Nation.

The Crown acknowledged Reynolds' treaty right to hunt and sell the moose as a result of the 1999 Marshall ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada, which said Mi'kmaq and Maliseet people could earn a "moderate livelihood" through fishing under treaties their ancestors signed in 1760 and 1761.

Even so, prosecutors charged Reynolds for being a party to the violation by the non-aboriginal man, Addison Knox, who traded his Dodge Durango for the moose.

The province set up a permit system after the Marshall decision to allow non-aboriginal people to buy moose from aboriginal hunters.

But the Department of Natural Resources abolished the system in 2003 after consulting First Nations chiefs. That meant Knox's trade for the moose was illegal, the Crown argued during Reynolds' trial.

Reynolds' lawyer said the First Nations chiefs' 2003 agreement with the province to abolish permits for non-aboriginal people didn't comply with the Indian Act because there was no evidence it was approved by the Woodstock band council or membership.

That took the case into complex areas beyond the ability of a provincial court to handle, Morrison wrote, noting the trial judge didn't even deal with them.

"This case raises complex issues which have far reaching implications for aboriginal treaty rights." - *Justice Terrence Morrison in ruling*

Morrison said the Supreme Court has made it clear "that it is not appropriate to determine aboriginal treaty rights in the context of a summary conviction prosecution."

"This case raises complex issues which have far reaching implications for aboriginal treaty rights," Morrison wrote, which require that "all parties interested in the outcome ... be given the chance to be heard."

He says, "the frailties and inadequacies of the summary conviction process for adjudicating aboriginal treaty rights" identified in earlier cases applied.

The government's written statement didn't say if the province will appeal the rulings.

Bernard's lawyer did not respond to a request for comment. Reynolds' lawyer, Maria Henheffer, said she couldn't comment without her client's permission

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/judges-aboriginal-treaty-rights-hunting-1.3480886>

## **Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women**

### **'You can do better': Indigenous teen calls on Winnipeg police to make MMIW a priority**

**Brianna Jonnie, 14, writes missing and murdered indigenous girls and women are not important to police**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 06, 2016 11:14 PM CT Last Updated: Mar 07, 2016 10:30 AM CT



An indigenous girl in Winnipeg has a message for police chief Devon Clunis: You can do better.

Brianna Jonnie, 14, wrote it in a letter addressed to Clunis, a number of government officials and members of local media. In it, she describes observing cases of non-indigenous missing persons treated differently than those involving indigenous girls and women.



"And if I do go missing and my body is found, please tell my mom you are sorry. Tell her I asked to be buried in my red dress, for I will have become just another native statistic," Brianna Jonnie, 14, wrote in a letter to Winnipeg Police Service Chief Devon Clunis. (CBC)

She used the recent disappearance and subsequent death of Cooper Nemeth as an example.

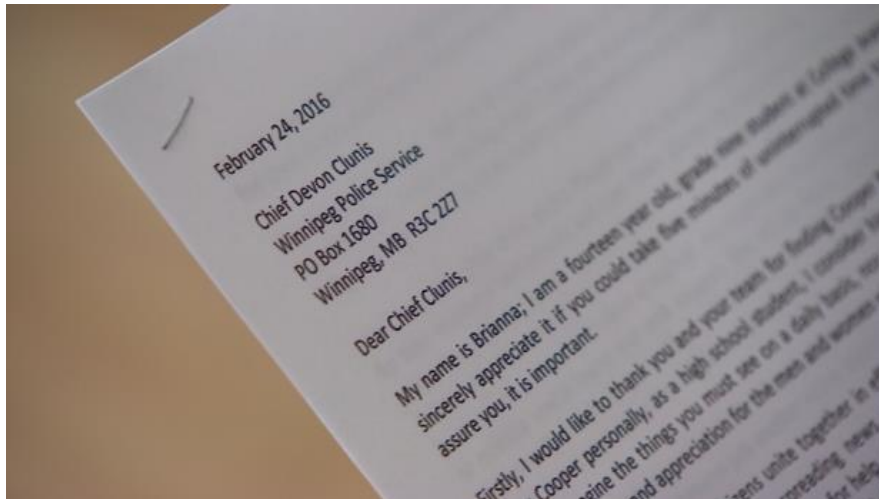
"Deputy Chief Danny Smyth conducted himself in a most respectful manner when disclosing Cooper had been found deceased and drugs were involved," Jonnie wrote.

"I have noticed missing indigenous girls are not afforded the same courtesies — by the community, the media or the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS)."

While Jonnie identifies herself as indigenous in the letter, she specifies she does not fit demeaning descriptions mainstream media have assigned to missing and murdered indigenous girls and women in the past — often to their loved ones' dismay.

"I am not involved in drugs, alcohol, prostitution, or other illegal activity," the letter reads.

"I am not a runaway, nor am I involved with Child and Family Services."



Jonnie's letter outlines specific instructions for Clunis to follow should she disappear from Winnipeg's streets. (CBC)

Acknowledging that her identity elevates her risk of encountering violence, Jonnie outlines instructions for Clunis to follow if she goes missing.

"Provide details that humanize me, not just the colour of my hair, my height and my ethnicity," she wrote.

"If I go missing and the WPS has not changed the behaviours I have brought to your attention, I beg of you, do not treat me as the indigenous person I am proud to be."

On Sunday, Jonnie said she started noticing what she believed were discrepancies in police reactions to indigenous and non-indigenous missing persons cases about two years ago.

"It was heartbreaking," she said.

She said she was surprised to find out Clunis is willing to meet with her and that reaction from the WPS and media has made her feel hopeful, as though change may be on the horizon.

"In the future I'd encourage people to not look at who the person that went missing might have been. I'd want them to look at just, 'This is a person, they went missing and we need to look for them,'" she said.

Her mother, Amanda McCormick, said she encouraged her to write the letter.

"Maybe after reading her letter ... maybe people will start to speak differently when they hear of an indigenous girl who's missing, and they won't just recognize her as indigenous; and they won't just recognize her as another runaway. They'll recognize her as human," she said.

## **'We need to do a better job'**

Speaking on behalf of the Winnipeg Police Service, Const. Jason Michalyshen said the letter reminded the force that they must do a better job educating the public about why investigations unfold the way they do.

The first step in that process is having Jonnie meet with the missing persons unit, which will take place in the coming days, according to Michalyshen.



Const. Jason Michalyshen said Jonnie's letter reminded the force they must do a better job of educating the public about why investigations unfold the way they do. (CBC)

A meeting with Clunis is in the works, too, he said, and it could happen as early as this week.

In the letter, Jonnie drew comparisons between the length of time it takes the WPS to send out a public notice about a missing non-indigenous person and a missing indigenous person.

"Tina Fontaine was reported missing on August 9, 2014. According to media, a WPS request for the public's help was submitted August 13th. Nora Leah Rae was reported missing on August 6, 2014 and the WPS appealed for help on August 22nd. Jaylene Amos was reported missing on January 4, 2016 and a request for help was issued on January 15th," she wrote.

"Cooper Nemeth however, had his image in the paper the next day; Thelma Krull was in online reports less than 24 hours after her disappearance and Alissa Voetberg, the next day."

But Michalyshen said the time it takes for police to send a missing person's notice does not indicate whether the case is a priority.

"News releases should not be a gauge of importance," he said, calling it a matter of "perception."

"The consensus is we need to do a better job of educating and providing a better and more accurate perception with respect to why investigations unfold the way they do."

He acknowledged, however, Jonnie's letter raised questions that must be answered.

"It was incredibly well-written," he said.

"A very compelling letter from a 14-year-old girl."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/brianna-jonnie-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-girls-women-1.3478640>

## Photo project raises awareness for missing and murdered indigenous women

**Photographer Stephanie Cooney says she wanted to speak up and help**

[CBC News](#) Posted: Mar 05, 2016 10:01 AM CT Last Updated: Mar 05, 2016 10:01 AM CT



A photo project in Saskatoon is raising awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women. (Reflections Photography/Facebook)

A photo project in Saskatoon is raising awareness about missing and murdered indigenous women.

Stephanie Cooney, who runs Reflections Photography, worked with indigenous models who wore red dresses in various places around the city.

"It was very interesting to me. It was something different I wanted to try, to do something new," Cooney said. "And I wanted to speak up and help."





The series showcases different locations in Saskatoon. (Reflections Photography/Facebook)

Red dresses have become synonymous with the cause after the REDress project toured the country. That visual art installation was to draw attention to the gendered and racial nature of violent crimes against aboriginal women by hanging red dresses in a public site.



The project was a way for the photographer to speak up and help. (Reflections Photography/Facebook)

Cooney was also inspired by the No More Stolen Sisters campaign through Amnesty International.



The photo project was to raise awareness. (Reflections Photography/Facebook)

Cooney said photography is her way of communicating and raising awareness.



Cooney was also inspired by the No More Stolen Sisters campaign through Amnesty International.  
(Reflections Photography/Facebook)

"My photos, they are pretty powerful. They are trying to show what goes on," she said.

"I would love to do more and raise awareness and try to get more out of it. Try to show the world what is going on."



Stephanie Cooney, who runs Reflections Photography, worked with indigenous models, wearing red dresses in various places around the city. (Reflections Photography/Facebook)

Cooney shared the project through [Reflections Photography's Facebook page](#).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/photo-project-raise-awareness-missing-and-murdered-1.3477611>

## **Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, and '60s Scoop**

### **Aboriginal leader Phil Fontaine believes in reconciliation**

[Christopher Curtis, Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: March 9, 2016 | Last Updated: March 9, 2016 8:05 PM EST



Former Assembly of First Nations national chief Phil Fontaine talks about how Canada and its aboriginal people can work toward reconciliation at McGill faculty of law, in Montreal, Wednesday March 9, 2016. Vincenzo D'Alto / Montreal Gazette

Phil Fontaine will never be whole again.

The 71-year-old has spent a lifetime recovering from the wounds he suffered as a child in Canada's residential school system. He says he's learned to let go of the bitterness and anger that came as a result of the abuse and that he's healthier now than he's ever been.

"But I'd be lying to you, I'd be trying to fool you, if I were to suggest that somehow I am a whole person and I've healed myself," Fontaine said Tuesday, during a talk sponsored by McGill University and the Zoryan Institute. "I'm not, I'm not, I just am not. But I'm strong enough not to feel the shame I carried with me, strong enough not to be burdened by the guilt that was such a huge part of my life."

Despite the obstacles that still stand in his way, Fontaine believes Canadians and its aboriginal people can reconcile from the collective trauma of residential schools. In a sense, the former Assembly of First Nations National Chief has to believe this is possible. It's been his life's work.

Fontaine helped secure the largest class action settlement in Canadian history in 2006, forcing the federal government to pay \$2 billion to the 86,000 people who survived the horrors of residential school. From the mid-18th century to 1996, the government forced about 150,000 aboriginal, Inuit and Métis children into boarding schools run by the Catholic and Anglican Church.

As part of the settlement agreement, Fontaine was also one of the architects of the 2008 apology from Prime Minister Stephen Harper to survivors on behalf of all Canadians.

“In my view, Canada, at that moment, came of age,” said Fontaine, an Ojibwa elder and member of the Order of Canada. “One of the things that will forever keep me hopeful about the whole thing is that those words, spoken on June 11, 2008, are part of the national record. We will always be able to refer to the apology. To say, ‘Oh look, this is what Prime Minister Harper said. This is what he said on behalf of the government, on behalf of all Canadians.’ And we will be in a position to remind successive governments of those words forever.”

After the apology and the harrowing stories that emerged from the subsequent Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Fontaine believes it’s time for the government to take concrete steps to create a more equitable society for indigenous Canadians.

“The most pressing challenge facing Canada is First Nations poverty,” said Fontaine. “Canada that is so rich, one of the wealthiest nations in the entire world, that we would have such grinding poverty in this place. Poverty that paralyzes communities and families and individuals. It is all over this beautiful, wonderful country. You can go to any city in Canada and you’ll see what I’m talking about.

“We can talk nice words about reconciliation... but if we don’t do something about First Nations poverty, we will truly fail in our efforts to bring about reconciliation.”

Canada’s aboriginal peoples lag far behind non-aboriginals on most quality of life indexes and children in particular are increasingly vulnerable. Studies suggest that over half of First Nations children live at or below the poverty line.

Fontaine, a longtime Liberal supporter, believes the solution lies in reviving the now-defunct 2005 Kelowna Accord —a \$5-billion agreement between Paul Martin’s Liberal government, Canada’s provinces, its territories and five national aboriginal leaders. The deal would have paid for better schooling, housing, infrastructure and other projects aimed at improving quality of life on reserves across the country.

The Conservative government scrapped the Kelowna Accord when it came to power in 2006. Even so, most studies and even Auditor General’s reports on the realities of life in First Nations suggest that the successive failures of Liberal and Conservative governments are to blame for some of the on-reserve living conditions.

While Fontaine pushes for large-scale projects, he says there are also symbolic gestures that could have a positive impact. The former AFN would like to see indigenous people recognized as founding members of Canada next year when the country celebrates the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

“If we’re able to achieve that, the origin story of Canada will change, it will reflect the true history of this country,” he said. “Otherwise, all of us here, including me, will be living a big lie.”

There are efforts, by some Canadian universities, to include mandatory indigenous history classes in their core curriculum and high schools across the country are beginning to teach students about the history of residential schools.

True reconciliation cuts both ways, according to Fontaine. Four years ago, Fontaine and his brothers worked together to forgive the Catholic Church.

“We talked about our anger, we talked about our bitterness, we talked about all of these feelings we had in us,” he said. “And we all came to the conclusion that we wanted to rid ourselves of these feelings. We wanted to embrace someone in the church, someone influential and powerful.”

The brothers invited Winnipeg Archbishop James Weisgerber to become a part of their family. During a traditional Ojibway adoption ceremony, Weisgerber accepted the invitation to become Fontaine’s brother.

“Church people were there, community people, families were there. It was a beautiful moment,” said Fontaine. “Archbishop James Weisgerber is our brother... (My grandson) Matthew is a quiet, reserved kind of guy, and he’s able to bring himself, in a loving way, to call (Weisgerber) ‘Uncle Jimmy.’ I thought that was pretty special.”

**Direct Link:** <http://montrealgazette.com/news/aboriginal-leader-phil-fontaine-believes-in-reconciliation>

## **Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations**

### **What A Native American Fish Hook’s Journey Says About A Little-Known Repatriation Law**

Written By [Andrea Shea](#)

Published March 4, 2016

Updated March 4, 2016, 10:57 am

BOSTON Throughout history Native Americans have had their land, possessions and culture taken away. But in recent decades the U.S. government has worked to right some wrongs through repatriation. Museums and federally funded institutions are required to go through their collections and report artifacts that might belong to tribes.



Now a small theological school in Newton is navigating this complex legal process for the first time.

Its collection of about 125 Native American artifacts includes one known as the Halibut Hook, and a lot of people are interested in its fate.



“Halibut Hook,” Haida or Tlingit artist, ca. 1800 (Courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum, via the Andover Newton Theological School)

David Katzeek is one of them. He sang for me over the phone, like tribal fishermen have for centuries as they lower a V-shaped, ornately carved, wood-and-bone hook into the water

“We would stomp our feet,” Katzeek recalled, and continued to chant in his ancestral language. The ceremonial hook is part of a ritual that helps fishermen honor the fish’s sacrifice. Halibut, like all living things, have a spirit, he believes, and his tribesmen would talk and sing to the fish below.

“They would be warning and letting the halibut know that it was coming to do battle with them,” Katzeek said, then explained the meaning behind the fishermen’s words: ““You’re going to fight with this, it’s going to fight with you.” ”

Katzeek leads the Thunderbird Clan in Southeast Alaska. He says the Halibut Hook (known to him as the Gooch Kuyéik Náxw, translation: “Halibut Hook with Wolf Spirit”) is a treasured spiritual object.

Now Katzeek and the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes are fighting to reclaim the Halibut Hook they believe is theirs.

But the hook is not in Alaska — it’s in Massachusetts, in the collection of the Andover Newton Theological School (ANTS), the oldest graduate seminary in the United States.



The tribes didn't know where this Halibut Hook was until last summer. That's when they learned the financially struggling school was thinking of selling or transferring dozens of Native American artifacts as it weighed the future of its campus. (In November ANTS [announced](#) it was putting the campus on the market, citing decline in enrollment, and would either relocate or merge with another school.)

The school's trove — along with the Halibut Hook — has been stored at the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem for decades.

“This Halibut Hook — which has carved clan figures on it — is quite distinctive,” the museum's director, Dan Monroe, told me. “A just straight-forward, functional Halibut Hook has quite a different form.”



Dan Monroe is director of the Peabody Essex Museum. (Andrea Shea/WBUR)

Monroe looked at a photo of the Halibut Hook while in his office. He explained that the story of how an object like this hook might go back to Alaska, after decades in Massachusetts, reveals the complexities of a legal process that repatriates potentially sacred artifacts.

“The level of pain surrounding these issues is hard for many people to understand,” Monroe said, “but it's very real.”

He knows the dark history behind that pain well. The PEM holds the largest collection of Native American artifacts in the Northern Hemisphere. And Monroe lived and worked in Alaska for years, where he developed relationships with the tribes there.

He talked to me about missionaries who fanned out across the U.S. in the late 1800s and 1900s to convert Native Americans. With westward expansion, he said people feared Indian culture would be eradicated.

“There had already been tremendous displacement of native people through disease, warfare and forced removal from their tribal lands, so there was there was this ‘fear of the

vanishing red man,' ” Monroe described, “which was the way that this was characterized. Consequently not only missionaries but natural history museums began an intensive period of collecting Native American material.”

That’s where a law known as NAGPRA comes in. The acronym stands for the [Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act](#). Monroe had a hand in designing it in 1990.

“The whole history of Indian policy in this country is painful,” said Melanie O’Brien, the NAGPRA program manager at the U.S. Department of the Interior. “NAGPRA was enacted to try to help fix some of those painful pasts.”

Since 1990 the act has required museums and federally funded institutions to submit lists of human remains and sacred or cultural objects. Hundreds of tribes can review the inventories and make claims to their cultural heritage.

Staff at the Andover Newton school say they didn’t fully understand its responsibility to NAGPRA that came to light when it briefly explored the sale or transfer of its Native American collection. The Interior Department alerted the school that it needed to comply with the law and is helping the school navigate the repatriation process.

“It’s a daunting responsibility,” admitted Nancy Nienhuis, a dean at the school, “and I’m not an expert — I’m a theologian by training, so this is new territory for me.”

Now it’s also become her job to document dozens of artifacts, consult with experts, and ultimately contact dozens of tribes. It’s like sleuthing, Nienhuis said, because the histories behind many of the objects — including the Halibut Hook — are elusive and challenging to trace.

It is believed that in the 1830s a Presbyterian missionary is responsible for five of the objects. Others were gifts from alumni. But Nienhuis said most of the paperwork and information about the artifacts’ pasts has been lost overtime.

“It’s not like a movie where you get to see that story unfold. We don’t know who the original donor was. We don’t know if they’re the ones who received the objects originally,” she said. “Did someone give it to them? Are they the daughter or son of someone? Without knowing exactly how things came to us, it’s very difficult to be able to tell the story of any particular object.”

Piecing those stories together takes a long time, Nienhuis said, because it’s crucial for the school to get it right. O’Brien explained that while the repatriation process is rigorous and intentionally deliberate, careful and slow, “I don’t think that Congress envisioned it would take quite so long to resolve the rights to all of these cultural items,” she said. “I’m

not sure that Congress realized how many were in the possession or control of museums and federal agencies.”

But according to O’Brien, ownership rights to more than 1.6 million Native American cultural items, human remains and funerary objects have been resolved since 1990.

Even so, scores of others — like the Halibut Hook — are still undetermined.

That’s frustrating to tribe members and Rosita Worl, president of the nonprofit [Sealaska Heritage Institute](#) in Juneau.

“Some clans haven’t had what we call ‘at.óow’ — they’re clan ceremonial objects, and they haven’t been able to participate in our ceremonies,” Worl explained.

Worl has been working with clan leaders, including Katzeek from the Thunderbird Clan, on their claim to the ceremonial Halibut Hook. She’s of the Tlingit tribe and told me that when sacred objects are repatriated, the healing effects reach beyond a single tribe.

“It’s brought museums and tribes together. We have better working relationships,” she said. “I also think it’s contributed to the knowledge about the belief systems and spirituality around the objects.”

Worl is a former NAGPRA Review Committee member and acknowledged the 25-year-old law isn’t perfect. Barriers include a lack of funding and the amount of time and money tribes, museums and institutions spend on the repatriation process. Next week the NAGPRA Review Committee will ask Congress for more support.

Meanwhile, Worl hopes the unfolding story of this Halibut Hook’s fate raises awareness for other institutions that might not know or understand what they might have in their collections.

*Correction: An earlier version of this report misspelled Nancy Nienhuis’ last name. We regret the error.*

**Direct Link:** <http://artery.wbur.org/2016/03/04/what-a-sacred-native-american-hooks-journey-tells-us-about-a-little-known-repatriation-law>

## **Honduran indigenous environmentalist leader killed by gunmen**



Men carry a coffin containing the body of slain Honduran Indian leader and environmentalist Berta Caceres, outside of the coroners office in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Thursday March 3, 2016.

March 3, 2016, 9:23 PM

**TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras** -- Honduran indigenous leader Berta Caceres, who won the 2015 Goldman Environmental Prize for her role in fighting a dam project, was shot dead Thursday by multiple gunmen who broke into her home, authorities said.

Caceres, a 40-year-old Lenca Indian activist, had previously complained of receiving death threats from police, soldiers and local landowners because of her work.

Tomas Membreno, a member of her group, the Indian Council of People's Organizations of Honduras, said at least two assailants broke into a home and shot Caceres to death early Thursday in the town of La Esperanza.

"Honduras has lost a brave and committed social activist," Membreno said in a statement.

The killing appeared to be targeted: A Mexican rights activist at the house was only slightly wounded in the attack, but Caceres's body had four gunshot wounds. Police said they had detained a suspect, but did not identify the person.

Caceres, a mother of four, led opposition to a proposed dam on the Gualcarque river, considered sacred by the Lencas.



People hold up photos of slain Honduran indigenous leader and environmentalist Berta Caceres outside the coroners office in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, Thursday, March 3, 2016.

Many of the project's backers have largely abandoned building plans.

President Juan Orlando Hernandez wrote in his Twitter account that "this act has caused mourning among all Hondurans."

His chief of staff, Jorge Alcerro, said "the president has instructed all government security forces to use all means to find the killers."

Alcerro said Caceres was supposed to be receiving special protection because of the death threats, but did not explain why there were no police protecting her when she was killed.

Security Minister Julian Pacheco said police had initially been assigned to protective detail but Caceres asked for them to be withdrawn because they bothered her. He added that more than two attackers broke down the door of her home to gain entry.

The London-based nonprofit Global Witness calls Honduras "the most dangerous country per capita to be an environmental activist" in recent years, with 101 such advocates slain between 2010 and 2014.

The U.S. ambassador in Honduras, James D. Nealon, issued a statement saying, "We strongly condemn this despicable crime. The United States of America calls for a prompt and thorough investigation into this crime and for the full force of the law to be brought to bear against those found responsible."

Later Thursday, the Honduran government said it was designating a commission of 12 experts to investigate Caceres' killing.

"The United States is helping on the case," Hernandez said, inviting other countries to also "join this noble cause."

The United Nations special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, wrote that "it is highly probable that her assassination is linked with her work in protecting the human rights of the Lenca indigenous peoples to their lands and territories."

The website of the Goldman Environmental Prize said Caceres "waged a grassroots campaign that successfully pressured the world's largest dam builder to pull out of the Agua Zarca Dam," which the site said "would cut off the supply of water, food and medicine for hundreds of Lenca people and violate their right to sustainably manage and live off their land."

Erika Guevara-Rosas, Americas director for Amnesty International, said in a statement that "the cowardly killing of Berta is a tragedy that was waiting to happen."

"For years, she had been the victim of a sustained campaign of harassment and threats to stop her from defending the rights of indigenous communities," said Guevara-Rosas.

Relatives of Caceres said her body would be interred Sunday.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/honduran-indigenous-environmentalist-leader-killed-by-gunmen-berta-caceres/>

## **Indigenous Tribe Creates Computer Game To Preserve Culture, Fight Prejudice**

“Prejudices exist even today because of a lack of public information about indigenous people.”

03/03/2016 10:47 am ET | Updated 5 days ago

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[Sarah Grossman](#) Editorial Fellow, The Huffington Post

A new [computer game](#) is helping to celebrate and preserve indigenous culture in Brazil.

Guilherme Meneses, an anthropologist from the University of Sao Paulo, worked with around 30 people from the Kaxinawa tribe in the Amazon to develop a game that explores their ancient myths, rituals and stories, according to [Agencia Brasil](#).

"We decided the script and stories with them [the indigenous]," said Meneses to the Brazilian news outlet, according to a Huffington Post translation. "They designed the prototypes, recorded the music and sound effects. Shamans narrated the stories."

The game is called Huni Kuin, or “real people,” which is how the people of the Kaxinawa tribe refer to themselves, according to the [Rio Times](#). In it, a pair of indigenous twins, a young hunter and artisan, pass through a series of challenges to become a healer (*mukaya*) and a master of drawings (*kene*), according to the [website](#). Along the way, players learn about the Kaxinawa ancestors, animals and spirits of the forest (*yuxibu*).





HUNI KUIN In a scene from the game, a tribe member tells the player: "To be a real person, you have to learn the knowledge of the Yuxibu."

"My original idea was that gamers would get a view into what the indigenous world is like," said the anthropologist to Agencia Brasil. "This would help break down prejudices that exist even today because of a lack of public information about indigenous people."

The indigenous people of Brazil face serious discrimination, injustice and violence, according to the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, in a [HuffPost blog](#) from 2011.

"The situation of indigenous people is astonishingly invisible," Pillay writes. "I did not see a single indigenous person among all the state and federal officials I met during my visit. That is very indicative of their continued marginalization."



ASSOCIATED PRESS Indians protest to demand the demarcation of indigenous lands outside the Supreme Court in Brasilia, Brazil, Tuesday, May 27, 2014.

More recently, indigenous people across Brazil [protested](#) in 2014 against new legislation that would shrink reserves and undermine protection of ancestral lands.

"It is still all too common to see indigenous peoples denigrated as 'backwards' or 'primitive' as an excuse for stealing their lands, forcing development projects on them



against their will, or even killing them," Fiona Watson, senior campaigner for [Survival International](#), told the Huffington Post via email on Wednesday. "We welcome any project which helps to break down prejudice and stereotypes born of ignorance in an engaging way, and with direct input from tribal peoples."

There are about 240 tribes living in Brazil today, totaling around 900,000 people, according to the organization, which advocates for tribal people's rights.

The game will be available for free download online starting in April, according to the [website](#).

H/T [BBC](#).

*CORRECTION: A previous version of the story said that 45 people from the Kaxinawa tribe worked on the game. The figure is actually around 30.*

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/computer-game-indigenous-brazil\\_us\\_56d73694e4b0bf0dab343995](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/computer-game-indigenous-brazil_us_56d73694e4b0bf0dab343995)

## New Book Helps Native American Girls Cope After Sexual Assault

A full 34.1 percent of Native women reports being assaulted at some point in her life.

[Kenrya Rankin](#) Mar 4, 2016 11:32AM EST



Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center offers "What to Do When You're Raped: An ABC Handbook for Native Girls" via free download. Colorlines screenshot of the booklet's cover, taken March 4, 2016

It's time for some sobering stats: The U.S. Department of Justice [reports](#) that Native American women are 2.5 times more likely to be assaulted than the rest of the American population. And one in three Native women has been assaulted at some point in her life.

Lake Andes, South Dakota-based Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center (NAWHERC) handles the fallout of this reality each day. Seeing women and girls struggle to return to themselves following assault prompted the program team—run by nonprofit Native American Community Board—to create “What to Do When You're Raped: An ABC Handbook for Native Girls.” From defining rape to providing info on emergency contraception rights to an extensive resource list, the free illustrated guide helps girls navigate the emotional, physical and legal jungle that lies on the other side of sexual violation.

NAWHERC CEO Charon Asetoyer spoke to [Indian Country Today](#) about the jurisdictional issues that often prevent Native Americans from getting justice in these cases, and how her organization aims to support survivors:

Due to complicated issues related to jurisdiction, most often there is not an arrest made of the perpetrator. Therefore, Native American women are denied protection and due process of the law. On federal lands it is the responsibility of the federal government to handle these crimes. We can no longer wait for the government to decide if and when they are going to live up to their responsibility. As a community response, one of the things we can do is assist our relatives who have been harmed and to help them with the healing process. It is important for a person that has been sexually assaulted to know that they are not alone and that there is always somewhere to turn to for help. The sooner you tell someone what has happened to you the sooner you will begin to realize that you are not alone and that you have support in dealing with the assault.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.colorlines.com/articles/new-book-helps-native-american-girls-cope-after-sexual-assault>

## **Even The Native American Tribe Famous For Pocahontas Only Just Won Federal Recognition. Here's Why**



[Christine Stoddard](#)

5 days ago [News](#)

After a 34-year-long fight, the [Pamunkey tribe of Virginia, which claims Pocahontas](#) as one of its ancestors, achieved federal recognition on Jan. 28. But they are not the last tribe left fighting, and nor has the tribe's journey for sustainability ended.

For me, it wasn't until high school that I realized that Virginia, my home state, had several active Native tribes and that Natives — not just people of Native American ancestry — live throughout the United States, on and off Indian reservations. They're not confined to the western part of the country. Some Natives belong to tribes recognized by federal and state governments; others belong to tribes U.S. and state governments do not acknowledge as self-governing communities.

While national outlets like [PBS](#), [The Atlantic](#), and [The New York Times](#) have illuminated the [socioeconomic troubles](#) that continue to ravage Indian reservations today, many non-Natives are in the dark about another widespread struggle: the fight for federal recognition.

Federal recognition means that the U.S. government considers a tribe a sovereign nation that legally can establish its own government and apply for federal benefits to help preserve its people and culture. Getting that designation isn't an easy process.

And if the Pamunkeys — one of the first tribes Europeans had contact with and a tribe whose reservation has remained in the same spot since the 1600s — had trouble achieving it, that alone may be a sign that the process needs an overhaul. Once a tribe earns recognition, applying for the assistance that allows them to safeguard their traditions, while adapting to a modern world, remains a battle.

"It's important to let people know that we're still here," says Wendy Taylor, a 27-year-old Pamunkey woman who has portrayed Pocahontas at [Historic Jamestowne](#). "We haven't gone anywhere, but we're also not in the 1500s anymore. We don't live in what people think; teepees, even though our people never lived in teepees. We live in houses. We have cars. We don't ride horseback anymore. We are modern."

According to the U.S. Department of the Interior's [Bureau of Indian Affairs website](#), sovereignty matters because it "ensures that any decisions about the tribes with regard to their property and citizens are made with their participation and consent." The benefit and assistance programs available to federally-recognized tribes are in a sense reparations for past transgressions.

Per the BIA's document, ["Procedures for Establishing That An American Indian Group Exists As an Indian Tribe,"](#) groups must meet, at minimum, the following criteria:

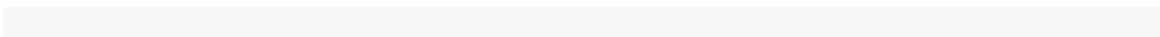
- Identification as an Indian entity by federal authorities;
- Relationship with state governments based on identification of the group as Indian;
- Dealings with a county, parish, or other local government in a relationship based on the group's Indian identity;
- Identification as an Indian entity by anthropologists, historians, and/or other scholars;
- Identification as an Indian entity in newspapers and books;
- Identification as an Indian entity in relationships with Indian tribes or with national, regional, or state Indian organizations.

"I won't go so far as saying [federal recognition] is an apology from the federal government, but it's a way of setting the record straight," says Bob Gray, who has been chief of the Pamunkey tribe for the past eight months and lived on the reservation since 1988.

At this time, there are [13 tribes petitioning for this designation](#). They hail from everywhere from California to Georgia.

### **The Pamunkey's Long Road**

The Pamunkey reservation, once known as Pamunkey Island or Indian Town, sits on a rural 1,200-acre peninsula by the Pamunkey River in Eastern Virginia. It is the same flat, Tidewater land the Pamunkey people have occupied since a 17th-century treaty with the King of England made it their then-new home.





*One of the road signs directing visitors to the Pamunkey reservation.*

Today, the reservation runs a museum, a gift shop, and a fish hatchery. It also has a one-room school house on the property that the tribe plans to remodel when funds become available. The burial mound of Chief Powhatan, the mighty Indian chief and father of Pocahontas, is perhaps the reservation's most storied attraction. Overall, the reservation is a placid and raw place that feels too remote to sit a mere hour drive from Richmond or two-and-a-half-hour drive from Washington, D.C.

Long before Taylor portrayed Pocahontas, she grew up in Chesterfield County, a suburb south of Richmond. When she moved to the reservation in high school, the transition proved to be a shock.

"I didn't appreciate the reservation much as a teenager," she says. "I went from a gas station being two miles away to 20 miles away."



*A sign for the Pamunkey reservation museum and gift shop.*

In order to get to class on time, Taylor remembers having to board the school bus at 6:30 a.m., even though the bell didn't ring until a few minutes after 8 a.m., because the



reservation was so far away. After school, Taylor mainly hung out with her cousin, who was about the same age as her and also lived on the reservation. Once Taylor was old enough to drive and get a job, she did. She moved off of the reservation when she was 19 or 20.

Taylor doesn't recall any bullying or othering at school because of her Native identity, though she was told that when her family still lived in Chesterfield, there was a little boy whose parents wouldn't let him play with her because she was Native. Once Taylor moved to the reservation, she and her siblings attended King William County Public Schools with all the other children from the Pamunkey and nearby Upper Mattaponi and Mattaponi tribes. None of the reservations had operating schools of their own, which remains the case today.



*The Audubon Society has recognized the reservation as a special bird habitat.*

Now Taylor lives in King William, the county that surrounds the reservation, and commutes about 45 minutes each way to work in a Richmond bank. Today, she sees the reservation as a place of "tranquility."

"Being by the river is relaxing," she says. "It gives you peace of mind."

About one-fourth of the tribe's 200 members live on the reservation. Others are scattered throughout the City of Richmond metro area and farther north along the East Coast. Gray says that many Pamunkeys, including his family, fled Virginia in the first half of the 20th century because of the state's hostile laws toward Natives and other People of Color. But he hopes that federal recognition may entice more Pamunkeys back to the reservation, including ones who may be suspicious of the U.S. government.



*An exterior shot of the Pamunkey Indian Museum.*

“Attitudes are changing,” Gray says. “Now the federal government has to get past all of that baggage [of historical treatment of Native Americans]. That’s where some of the mistrust comes from.”

The BIA petition process also has been what Gray charitably calls a “slow” one, and with limited economic and educational opportunities on or near the reservation, many Pamunkeys do not find it the most convenient place to live. The Pamunkey tribe has patiently spent decades assembling records — birth certificates, ledger books from the 1800s, treasury reports — to meet the BIA’s requirements, all in the hopes that government assistance might make the reservation a less difficult place to live.



*Traditional Pamunkey pottery on display in the museum.*

“The whole petition took hand trucks of documentation to load into the BIA,” says Gray, who added that the hand trucks contained both paper and digital documents.



Last July, the Pamunkey tribe finally achieved federal recognition, only to have their petition challenged by the anti-gambling group, Stand Up California, a nonprofit that had formerly teamed up with MGM. According to Cheryl Schmit, the sole member of Stand Up California, the Pamunkey tribe did not meet the BIA's requirements. Her motive? She opposed [then-Pamunkey chief Kevin Brown's alleged interest in building a reservation casino](#). Last month, the BIA appeals board ruled that the Pamunkey tribe does indeed meet federal recognition requirements.



*A purse featuring traditional Pamunkey embroidery in the museum gift shop.*

Now it is up to the Pamunkey tribe to decide which federal benefit and assistance programs make the most sense for its people.

“It's like a buffet line,” says Gray. “We can pick and choose what we want.”



*A sign designating what allegedly is an 18th-century Pamunkey raccoon trap.*

Kim Cook Taylor, a tribe member whose eldest daughter Kim portrays Pocahontas for Colonial Williamsburg, believes housing must be addressed first.

“The top priority is housing because you can't use your land here as collateral for a loan,” she says. “That's why you see so many double-wides here. You have to have the money for your house upfront.”



*One of the waterfront properties on the Pamunkey reservation.*

On Feb. 17, the Pamunkey tribe [received a \\$50,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#).

It's not much, but it's a start," says Gray.



*The hatchery where the Pamunkey raise shad, a popular kind of game fish.*

## **A Shared Struggle**

Federal recognition in no way guarantees that Natives will lead comfortable lives.

Derek, 19, who is a member of the Diné, or Navajo, tribe, moved from his reservation to Mesa, Arizona, at the beginning of 2015, not long after he graduated from high school. When I asked him to describe the reservation, he wrote the following in an email:

Picture this: On the reservation, you're either teaching or learning, working or going to school. Lifestyles are almost all similar. ... Across the Diné Nation, families continue to haul water and wood for survival. Families also still travel long distances for access to food markets. Basically, the reservation is like a city with no buildings, fewer people, fewer paved roads, and the majority of the people are Natives.

Despite hardships and limited economic opportunities, Derek says that reservations are necessary for his people because “the Diné grade school kids and elderly need a place to all home and acres of soil to raise future generations.”

Wendy Taylor, who is a mother of two, agrees that reservations are necessary, though living on one should be "an individual preference." While she believes federal recognition may bring more younger Pamunkey families to the reservation, others will want to stay where they are — even if it means being separated from people who share their culture.



*A wood carving at the site of Chief Powhatan's grave.*

"They're going to want to be closer to where their work is," she says. "Living on the reservation, you have to travel so far. When there's snow, it's hard to get out. When there are hurricanes, the power lines come down. It's not as convenient for young people as for the older generation."

She adds that schools are another concern for Pamunkey parents of young children.

Whether they live on or off a federally-recognized reservation, Native Americans' place in Euro-American society remains complicated. But Buck Woodward, a cultural anthropologist who directs Native American programs at Colonial Williamsburg in

Virginia, also warns against generalization. In working to honor inclusivity, you may risk assuming all Native groups have the same priorities.

"It's not just one Native story," says Woodward, who adds that Native Americans have multiple narratives and multiple voices among them, whether they're Pamunkey or Cherokee.

Taylor agrees that while "commonalties among tribes" exist, "every tribe has had to go through their own ordeals."

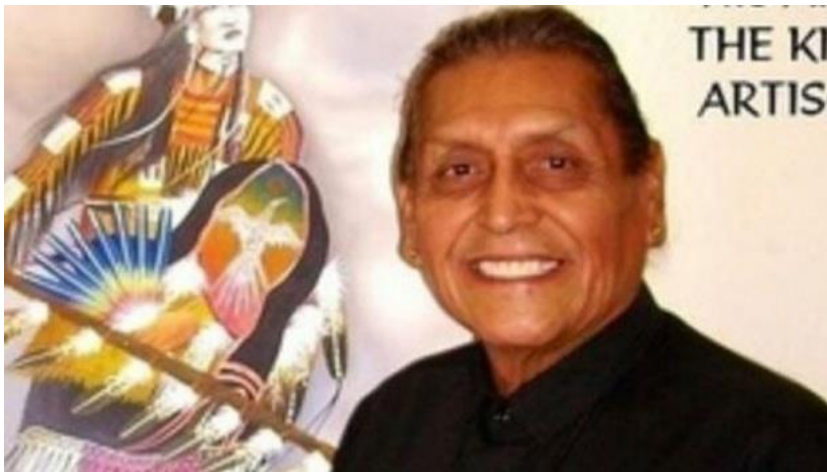
"In certain aspects, we can relate," she says. "As Natives, we can all connect on certain levels [federally recognized or not]."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.bustle.com/articles/142421-even-the-native-american-tribe-famous-for-pocahontas-only-just-won-federal-recognition-heres-why>

## Robert Redbird, iconic Native American artist, dies

*Dies at age 76 from extended illness*

UPDATED 9:07 PM CST Mar 05, 2016



Robert Redbird Sr. family via CNN

(CNN) —Robert Redbird, the iconic Native American artist, died early Saturday morning after an extended illness, his family confirmed.

He was 76.



An Oklahoman who was part of the Kiowa tribe, Redbird's drawings and paintings showed the beauty and breadth of Native American culture from the vast bleakness of the Comanche in the snow to cultural symbols such as the eagle and pottery.

Redbird's paintings depicting blanket-wrapped Southern Plains figures became part of his artistic identity and representative of modern Native American artwork.

His home state of Oklahoma declared "Robert Redbird Day" on June 7, 2003.

"Robert Redbird's art is full of his conviction that Native American culture is a beautiful way of life and his art conveys his feeling for Kiowa tradition and ceremonies, for the spiritual in the culture of many tribes and for the world of nature," wrote then-Oklahoma Gov. Brad Henry, in the text of the declaration.

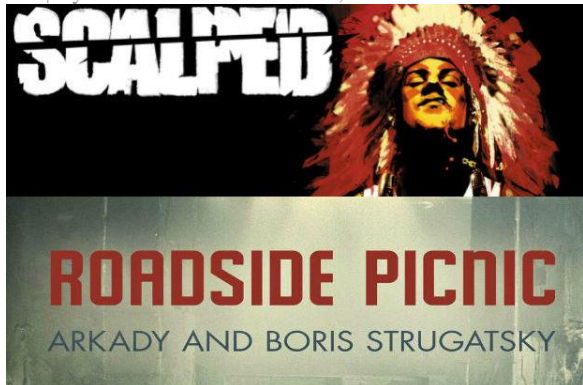
His work, which is recognizable by his trademark signature with a feather and the word Kiowa, has been exhibited and collected around the world.

He leaves behind Joquetta, his wife of 55 years, and 15 children, many of whom are carrying on his work.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.kcci.com/robert-redbird-iconic-native-american-artist-dies/38358966>

## **WGN America Orders Native American Crime Series 'Scalped,' Sci-Fi Series 'Roadside Picnic' to Pilot**

**TV** | By Joe Otterson on March 7, 2016 @ 9:00 am Follow @JoeOtterson



Vertigo/MacMillan Publishing

Shows are latest original series to be developed by network

WGN America has ordered pilots for Native American series “Scalped” and the sci-fi drama “Roadside Picnic,” TheWrap has learned.

“Scalped” is based on the DC Comics series of the same name written by Jason Aaron and illustrated by R.M. Guéra.

The series is described as a modern-day crime story set in the world of a Native American Indian reservation. It will explore power, loyalty and spirituality in a community led by the ambitious Chief Lincoln Red Crow, as he reckons with Dashiell Bad Horse, who has returned home after years away from the reservation.

“Big Love’s” Doug Jung will serve as the writer and executive producer for the pilot, with “The Flash” and “Arrow’s” Geoff Johns also executive producing. Warner Horizon will produce along with DC Entertainment.

“Roadside Picnic” is based on the novel by Arkady and Boris Strugatsky. In a near-future world where aliens have come and gone, the series follows Red, a veteran “stalker” who has made it his life to illegally venture into the once inhabited zone and scavenge the abandoned remains of the alien culture.

“Alien: Covenant” screenwriter Jack Paglen will write the pilot with Alan Taylor directing. Both will also serve as executive producers along with Vivian Cannon and “The Fast and the Furious” producer Neal Moritz. Sony Pictures Television and Original Film will produce the series.

The pilots are the latest attempts by WGN America to break into producing original scripted content. “Salem” is going into its third season on the network, while “Manhattan” was recently canceled after two seasons.

WGN America launched “Outsiders,” about a mountain clan fighting back against a coal company, earlier this year, and will premiere the Underground Railroad drama “Underground” on March 9.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thewrap.com/wgn-america-orders-native-american-series-scalped-sci-fi-series-roadside-picnic-to-pilot/>

## **J.K. Rowling's Portrayal Of Native Americans In New Harry Potter Stories Is Angering Fans**

Mar 7, 2016 1:45 PM  
Shannon Carlin

J.K. Rowling is releasing a new set of Harry Potter stories that focus on magic in North America, but her portrayal of Native Americans is angering some who say she is perpetuating stereotypes and positioning fact as fiction.

Before Rowling takes fans back to 1920s New York City in the film Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them, she's filling them in on the history of magic beyond the walls of Hogwarts with the series, The History of Magic in North America.

In a set of four original stories, which will be available on Pottermore later this week, Rowling will tackle topics that she hasn't discussed before, including the U.S. Hogwarts, the Salem witch trials, America's Ministry of Magic, and the Native American legend of the skin-walkers, who have the ability to turn into any animal they desire.

But after a trailer for the stories was released via Entertainment Weekly, the latter topic is angering fans, including Dr. Adrienne Keene, the writer behind the website Native Appropriations, which acts as a forum to talk about representations of native people.

In an open letter to Rowling, which expands on a previous letter Keene wrote to the author in 2015, Keene writes that for too long Native Americans have been portrayed as magical, mystical, and spiritual people who are able to "talk to animals, conjure spirits, perform magic, heal with 'medicine' and destroy with 'curses.'"

"But we're not magical creatures, we're contemporary peoples who are still here, and still practice our spiritual traditions," Keene writes. "Traditions that are not akin to a completely imaginary wizarding world (as badass as that wizarding world is)."

Keene explains that until 1978, native peoples were not legally allowed to practice "our religious beliefs or possess sacred objects like eagle feathers." She asserts that this was a form of cultural genocide that worked to "stamp out these traditions, and with them, our existence as Indigenous peoples."

We've fought and worked incredibly hard to maintain these practices and pass them on," Keene continues. "So I get worried thinking about the message it sends to have 'indigenous magic' suddenly be associated with the Harry Potter brand and world."

Keene's main concern after watching this trailer? "How in the world could a young person watch this and not make a logical leap that Native peoples belong in the same fictional world as Harry Potter?"

She would like to see more representation of Native American history and beliefs in pop culture, but wants "Native peoples to be able to represent ourselves."

"I know it can be done, and it can be done right and done well," she writes. "But it has to be done carefully, with boundaries respected (ie not throwing around Skinwalkers casually in a trailer), and frankly, I want Native peoples to write it. We've been misrepresented by outsiders every which-way, and it's time for us to reclaim our stories and images, and push them into the future, ourselves."

In the original 2015 letter to Rowling, Keene makes it clear that she is "unabashedly a huge Harry Potter fan," but expresses concern over Rowling's use of "indigenous magic" in a way that makes it seem fake, when in fact, it's very real.



After the release of the trailer Keene tweeted to fans to see whether any Native people have spoken with Rowling about these stories, writing, "I'm happy to be proven wrong."

Other fans have also started speaking out on Twitter, questioning the way Rowling is portraying Native American history.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.refinery29.com/2016/03/105362/jk-rowling-native-americans>

## **New JK Rowling story History of Magic in North America depicts Native American wizards**

The first part of Rowling's new online series History of Magic in North America sheds light on Native American magic – and expands the Harry Potter universe across the pond

Tuesday 8 March 2016 14.23 GMT Last modified on Wednesday 9 March 2016 08.08 GMT

Harry Potter author JK Rowling has published her first expansion of the magical universe she created in the bestselling fantasy book series she began 20 years ago: History of Magic in North America, a series of short stories telling the magical history of America.

The first part that launched today, titled Fourteenth Century – Seventeenth Century, reads like an extract from an academic tome and tells the story of how wizards communicated with North America before it was colonised by non-magical humans, or 'No-Maj', a term revealed by Rowling recently as an American slang equivalent to the British term 'Muggle' used in the Harry Potter books.

Rowling writes that "the Native American magical community and those of Europe and Africa had known about each other long before the immigration of European No-Majs in the seventeenth century" and that the proportion of magic folk in the population is consistent all over the world. Rowling then focuses on Native American magic, writing that wizards in Native American tribes were "accepted and even lauded" by their people, for their skills in healing and hunting.

The author weaves in some of her existing lore into the new story, using her term from the Harry Potter books, 'Animagi' – wizards and witches who can turn into animals at will – to explain the use of magic amongst Native American tribes. Rowling refers to 'skin walkers', an actual myth of the Navajo people, where individuals gain the ability to transform into animals at night, usually after killing a family member. Rowling writes that these individuals were usually Animagi who did not use sacrifices to gain their powers, but "assumed animal forms to escape persecution or to hunt for the tribe. Such derogatory rumours often originated with No-Maj medicine men, who were sometimes faking magical powers themselves, and fearful of exposure."

Rowling also explains that Native American wizards are better at making potions than European wizards, but do not use wands like their counterparts across the world.

“The magic wand originated in Europe. Wands channel magic so as to make its effects both more precise and more powerful, although it is generally held to be a mark of the very greatest witches and wizards that they have also been able to produce wandless magic of a very high quality,” Rowling writes, “As the Native American Animagi and potion-makers demonstrated, wandless magic can attain great complexity, but Charms and Transfiguration are very difficult without one.”

The series of stories coming this week are connected to the upcoming cinematic expansion of the Harry Potter universe: *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, a trilogy of films set in 1920s New York, 70 years before the Harry Potter books begin. The films will tell the story of Newt Scamander, a expert in magical animals – or ‘magizoologist’ – and author of a textbook Potter himself finds on his recommended reading list in his first year at Hogwarts. The first film, which stars Oscar winner Eddie Redmayne as Scamander and was written by Rowling herself, will be released worldwide in November 2016.

The trailer for *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

Despite a spate of announcements putting Rowling back in the Harry Potter universe – the author recently announced she was helping with the stage play *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, an “eighth Harry Potter story” that will continue Potter’s story when he is middle-aged, and the film *Fantastic Beasts*, which she wrote the screenplay for – *History of Magic in North America* is the first expansion of the canon and her first depiction of the magical community in North America.

Part one of JK Rowling’s new online series expands the Harry Potter universe across the pond, but amounts to little more than an advert for *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*

Today’s 400-word story is the first of four new stories building the history magical America published on Pottermore each day this week. Rowling has previously dabbled in building on the existing Harry Potter universe with short stories, starting the website Pottermore as a home to tidbits of information about what happened to the characters before and after the series was set, including Quidditch – a magical sport – match reports penned by Harry’s wife Ginny Weasley. In 2014, Pottermore crashed when fans flooded to the site to read a new story about Harry and his friends, written in the style of a tabloid news article.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/08/new-jk-rowling-story-history-of-magic-in-north-america-depicts-native-american-wizards>

# International Women's Day: Honor the Strength of Indigenous Women

Sarah Sunshine Manning

3/8/16

*“International Women’s Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.” –United Nations*

Our mark on the world as indigenous women is often told in the time-honored creation stories of our nations. Stories of formation, emergence, resilience, triumph, and grace are threaded throughout the creations stories of our people where women are not only essential, but powerful.

The stories of Stone Mother, Sky Woman, Spider Woman, White Shell Woman, and the White Buffalo Calf Woman remind us of who we once were, and the potential of we who can become again. It is from our creation stories where our revered understanding of women transpires, and through the telling and retelling of stories that our understanding of women is bolstered and maintained: Women are sacred, and the life force of all creation.

Yet where we stand today as indigenous women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is in an unfortunate, complicated, and injured position, resulting from centuries of colonial assaults on our identity, assaults that disconnected entire nations from the fundamental understanding of the worth and sacredness of women. We are the backbone of nations, and yet, our backbone, today, is aching.

As a collective, we ache as single mothers who struggle to raise children alone, as abused and battered women, as women sexually assaulted, and sometimes assaulted multiple times, as women taken advantage of and dishonored by men, dishonored by society, sexualized, minimized, and dismissed, as women whose bodies still lie unfound, murdered, violated, and left behind, stories untold, spirits broken, and pains unhealed. In our world today, it is tragically normal for indigenous women to suffer so egregiously. As nations, we have lost our way.

As a collective, indigenous women we are hurting greatly, and, in many ways, our aches and pains penetrate our spirits so deeply that our children ache just as deeply, and thus as a natural consequence, entire nations ache just as deeply, too. The condition and treatment of women in Indian country must change, and the efforts to heal and honor women must be greater.

Upon examination of our many beautiful creation stories, it is clear that our ancestors intended for us to be so much more. On this significant day set aside for reflecting on the condition of women in our world, it is of value and significance to revisit those creation

stories that lift up the sacredness of women, the stories that teach us to honor the totality of women as life-givers, as nurturers of children, and builders of nations. We are all deserving of so much more, and our creation stories hold key insights to reconnecting to the strength of who we once were.

As the Cheyenne proverb says, “A nation is not defeated until the hearts of its women are on the ground.” And though our collective hearts are by no means on the ground, for far too many indigenous women, the painful reality is that perhaps their hearts are tragically close to the ground, and for some of them their hearts may already be buried, in the literal sense. If there is any day that we can speak of this honestly, International Women’s Day is that day. Today is the day to speak of lifting indigenous women back up.

In honor and remembrance of the women who may have never experienced a life of feeling deeply valued, sacred, and protected, and also in honor of the women who blazed the paths before us to reconnect to our power today, we owe them this much — remember them, lift up indigenous women today, as sisters, relatives, spouses, and significant others, and honor the totality of our collective worth. Women are sacred, the life force of creation, and the backbone of nations. Together, we form an energy that nurtures children, and builds entire nations. Today and every day, let us reconnect to our power as nations by honoring the sacredness of women.

Sarah Sunshine Manning

*Sarah Sunshine Manning (Shoshone-Paiute, Chippewa-Cree) is a mother, educator, activist, and an advocate for youth. Follow her at [@SarahSunshineM](https://www.instagram.com/SarahSunshineM).*

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/03/08/international-womens-day-honor-strength-indigenous-women-163682>

## **House passes Native American education test program to help students succeed**

Bob Mercer Journal correspondent  
6 hrs ago

PIERRE | The state House of Representatives strongly supported a package of legislation Tuesday intended to help improve education of Native American students in South Dakota.

Senate Bill 81 creates a tuition assistance program for training paraprofessionals to become teachers at public school districts with high enrollments of Native American students. The estimated cost is \$430,000.

Rep. Shawn Bordeaux, D-Mission, called it “a grow your own” concept. House members voted for it 61-5.

Senate Bill 82 establishes the Native American achievement schools grant program. Bordeaux said the purpose is to try different ways to teach Native American students who aren’t succeeding in traditional public-school settings.

Up to three public schools with majority enrollments of Native American students and below-average achievement scores would qualify. The estimated cost is \$1.8 million. The schools have not yet been selected.

“It’s very important,” said Rep. Jacqueline Sly, R-Rapid City, chair of the House Education Committee. She said the graduation rate for Native American students is about half the rate for the overall population.

“That’s what this is about, educational choice,” said Rep. Kevin Killer, D-Pine Ridge.

Senate Bill 82 needs to return to the Senate for a decision whether to agree with some House amendments. The prime sponsor of senate bills 81 and 82 is Sen. Troy Heinert, D-Mission.

House members approved Senate Bill 82 on a vote of 60-8.

The appropriations measure for the two programs is Senate Bill 9. It contains \$2.2 million. House members approved it 62-6.

**Direct Link:** [http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/legislature/house-passes-native-american-education-test-program-to-help-students/article\\_699e5963-9ea4-528c-8da3-9a8913eae590.html](http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/legislature/house-passes-native-american-education-test-program-to-help-students/article_699e5963-9ea4-528c-8da3-9a8913eae590.html)

## **Artist set to show off trailmarker tree, Native-American themed art**



Artist Dennis Downes works on a bronze sculpture at his studio in Antioch. - Original Credit: News-Sun (by Dennis Downes / HANDOUT)

### **Frank S. Abderholden**

Ask Dennis Downes about trailmarker trees — think nature's own global positioning system before there was a grid to go off of — and he'll talk in great detail about how they once dotted the landscape around The Grove, a National Historic Landmark in Glenview.

Downes spent 30 years researching the trees, which Native Americans bent in different ways to signal to travelers river crossings, natural springs and other important information. He's bringing that knowledge, and his Native American-themed artwork, home this weekend where it will be on display.

"It's nice to have my biggest show here because I grew up in the area," Downes said Wednesday afternoon while setting up his show at the Redfield Estate. "It's just such a beautiful setting."

Downes, who once lived at The Grove, hosts his 16th solo art show this weekend starting Thursday. His show will include his latest additions to his trailmarker tree exhibit.

The accomplished artist has a studio in Antioch and another he is building in Ontario, but he is equally known and respected for his research into Native American trailmarker trees. He spent 30 years researching them before he published his book "Native American Trail Marker Trees: Marking Paths Through the Wilderness" in 2011.



Artist Dennis Downes shows one of his latest works, "Tree Hunter." - Original Credit: Dennis Downes (HANDOUT / HANDOUT)

"It's bizarre more people don't know about this place," he said of the 136 acres at Milwaukee and Lake Avenues in Glenview. His research found that the area once had numerous trailmarker trees, trees bent in a direction to mark a trail, because the area was used as a portage between the Des Plaines River and the North Branch of the Chicago River.

And now his art is being eclipsed by his research and documentation of trailmarker trees.

"What was cool is people came for the art and learned about the trees and now they come for both," he said, noting that people come from all over the country who have been following his work.

"My art is impressionistic landscapes and Native American symbolism," he said.

Downes said he often combined his two interests. While researching the use of trees to mark trails by Native Americans he also painted landscapes.

"People can look at my paintings and know where I've been. Canada pines look different than the ones in the Midwest," he said.





Dennis Downes with Chief Thundercloud's daughter, "Little Fawn," and a trailmarker tree he created. - Original Credit: News-Sun (By Dennis Downes / HANDOUT)

The main floor of his exhibit holds his paintings, bronze sculptures and prints while the second floor features photographic and written documentation of the Trail Trees both past and present.

He has participated in more than 100 solo, juried, public and private shows in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom over the past 25 years, he said. Several of his sculptures and paintings are on permanent display at museums, public libraries, historical societies, and national landmarks, as well as private collections across the country.

He said The Grove's historical significance got him energized about history and he spent summers traveling with his mother to various regions, including his mother's family, the Basque Berriochoa Clan, living in the Idaho and Montana Rocky Mountain area.

Trail Marker Trees are culturally modified trees that were part of an extensive land and water navigation system that was in place long before the first European settlers arrived in North America, Downes said. These trees had distinctive shapes and characteristics that would differentiate them from other trees that may have had natural deformities or anomalies. By utilizing trees, the Indians had a flexible sapling that was easy to shape while young, that would develop into a solid marker that would last for centuries, he said.

"It was like a language using trees to help them in their travels," he said.

Some marked the right area to cross a stream, some pointed to fresh water just off the main trail.

There are still some in Lake County, but on private property. A bronze statue of a trailmarker tree is in front of the Discovery Museum at the Lakewood Forest Preserve near Wauconda. He has also planted a circle of oak trees at Crow Island Park in Winnetka, but the real one can be seen during the annual Pow Pow celebration in Zion every year. He's also created new trailmarker trees from Green Bay, Wisconsin, to the Glenco train station and Sunset Park in Highland Park.

Now because of all the years he has promoted, documented and taught about the Native American trailmarker trees, he gets people sending old photographs and documents regarding sightings in their areas that he sees the knowledge about the ancient system growing.

"It seems like now the knowledge and information we've found is never ending," he said.

"My art and my research have joined together and I'm happy about it," he said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/lake-county-news-sun/news/ct-lns-trailmarker-trees-artist-downes-st-0310-20160309-story.html>